

THE WAY OF LOVE: TRAINING
LEADERS FOR SERVANT
LEADERSHIP

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ABSTRACT

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Homewood African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania is the context. The church experienced a decline in membership and the community experienced an economic downward spiral. If the congregation could increase awareness on how to become a unified congregation through small group leadership training, then the congregation would be able to foster and cultivate a better relationship with God, others, and the community for a healthier congregation. Pre-and post-surveys, a questionnaire, and group discussion are the instruments used over a six-week period. The expected result was to raise the level of the importance of servant leadership.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There was a time in the life of the church I attended as a youth when the members would give a testimony at the beginning of a Sunday morning service and during special afternoon services. This is one of those times I give honor to God for allowing me to accomplish the task of completing another assignment, goal, wish, and dream. I thank God through many dangers, toils, and snares, I have already come. From my first degree of study to this time and place, I must acknowledge God's providence in my life.

Dr. Bridgette Weatherspoon's phone call to invite me into the trenches took my breath away. Then to have Dr. Elvin Sadler, my denomination's General Secretary as my mentor, has been a plus in my life. Dr. Nelson's plethora of knowledge in how he views the world of leadership and the students through the eyes of sports has been outstanding. Dr. Madeline Hennessey lays it on the line. Be direct and consistent and let the Holy Spirit guide you are words she often stated. She has been a wealth of knowledge for each of us.

Dr. Jonathon Counts, former pastor, became my own personal cheerleader. As he was matriculating through his doctoral studies, he would always add a kind word and gesture to ensure that I could make it through. Therefore, I asked him to be one of my Professional Associate.

Thanking my new pastor, Rev. William Hogans, also a United Theological Seminary student, for his encouragement and permission for the Class Leaders to train

under my leadership. I hold this as a true honor in knowing that Pastor Hogan trusts me with his leadership team and helping them to move forward.

The students at United Theological Seminary are the best. They traveled far and near to fellowship, study, cry, pray, and lend a helping hand. This is what makes this seminary so great and blessed. From the president to the youngest member at the seminary, a ray of hope and faith always illuminates with sunshine even on the rainiest days.

I want to thank every professor, librarian, and all the personnel who helped me mentally with the business of the day. Also, I want to thank my editor, Dr. Lori Spears. She has been such an inspiration to me especially when I did not understand all her instructions. She would call me, text me, email me to slow down, take my time and follow the directions and guidance. Without her putting it all together for me, I would not have been able to complete this journey.

Thanking Homewood African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church of Homewood, Pennsylvania for accepting me as their Leader of Leaders over the Class Leader System and for providing me with feedback on how we can make it even better. There is no place like Home(wood).

DEDICATION

I dedicate this research work to my husband, Clyde Dewberry, my children Michael, Davida, and Beverli, and to my grandchildren. Thank you for walking with me through this journey. Thank you, Clyde, for understanding even when you did not understand. Children and siblings, now you know that you too can accomplish your dreams and heart's desire when you walk with God. This major task was accomplished by wife, mother, and grandmother.

INTRODUCTION

From orientation to semester six, I have been provided an opportunity to explore and learn more than I have ever hoped. This process has taught me the value of time relationships. There is a time for everything, and this journey has challenged me to trust the process. My first introduction to the process was writing my spiritual autobiography. I had not taken the time to hear myself talk about my own history and life experiences. Once introducing this journey to my peers and mentors, I began to reflect on how my past connected to the present and how it would affect my future.

The journey began with writing chapter one. This was an intriguing time interweaving ministry focus and the context of my soon to be project. In chapter one, I narrowed my focus on what I observed at Homewood African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church between the members and leadership. There was no real fellowship and cohesiveness among the members. With the loss of two pastors in a short period of time, and no mention of grief and loss counseling set aside for the congregation, this left an empty void in the ministry. The people were angry, hurt, and basically left to find their own way back to what was known as normalcy.

Even though there was a decline in members, financial support, and ministry participation, this church has been resilient. The church's history from its inception has been built on resiliency and perseverance. They struggled through being financially challenged, displaced at times, wars, the Depression of the 1930s, riots of the 1960s, the

many pandemics affected by African Americans as it related to discrimination, joblessness, drugs in the community, violence, and those relocating to other communities. Through it all this church has learned to trust in God for its survival.

The process began with pondering over what was needed to bring this church family together and have them engage with one another on a deeper level. After speaking with many of the members, I discovered they wanted to feel needed and valued. This is when I decided to research the scripture text about love and its value to people and to God. I took the experiences I had as a pastor serving in various communities and currently as a leader within the Class Leader System with the common factor that was always present in those experiences. Those factors included loving one another, loving oneself, and serving others. My desire in this process was to help build a healthy congregation on radical hospitality and a welcoming community of love.

The theme song for the forth coming chapters is, “What’s Love Got to do With it?” as it was performed and recorded by Tina Turner. First Corinthians chapter thirteen was used as my focal point for leaders and the congregation to read and understand the meaning of love.

In chapter two, my intent and purpose were to show my readers how God has a more excellent way for his people to live. Paul speaks in this chapter about how our relationships should be experienced. Each of the verses in this chapter answers the question asked in the popular song by Tina Turner. I provided my training class with a breakdown of the relationship expressed in the song being unhealthy and not safe.

Paul provided his readers a more excellent way for relationship purposes. Those under his leadership did not follow Paul’s teachings and arguments and division

happened among the people. In the Old Testament, Eli, the priest, also attempted to provide his sons leadership in a more efficient manner. However, their leadership was not acceptable to God; and Eli's attempt to reprimand them and instruct them went on deaf ears as they failed in providing a safe and healthy environment in the temple. These two illustrations were used in the biblical foundation chapter to express the value and worth of love for servant leadership purposes.

Chapter three addressed the good, bad, and ugly times where African Americans found themselves throughout history. The historical chapter continued the theme of defining and defending the importance of love sometimes disguised through the eyes of servant leadership. As one peruses through history, there will always be someone who wants to help, aid, or assist others in becoming effective and productive. This chapter addresses various incidences and situations where people of color were considered valued and undervalued, but not left without hope of a great future. Through various facets of life, sports, education, housing, employment, religious institutional settings, wars, and natural disasters the response of people has varied. Some have served to make things better while others have responded with disdain and uncaring attitudes. This chapter provides insight into the lives of people who struggled but still had hope and acknowledges those who showed radical love and kindness to make lives better, efficient, and productive.

Chapter four responded to the theme on love and the theology of love. Scripture text references to love included God loving the world then sending his Son who gives his life as a ransom for our sin. God being the Creator of love along with God's character infused with love, and how God's love changes people are essential in his plan for eternal

life. The theme for this chapter discussed by theologians and writers was love, its definition, and the aspects of love as it connected to relationships.

Chapter five introduced the readers to servant leaders who started businesses to help their families, communities, and some nationally to maintain healthy and safe environments. These leaders wanted to ensure their families had what is called a “B” plan for life. These great pioneers taught family members how to be in fellowship and relationship with another and with the community. They trained family members how to be leaders and offered opportunities for the community to develop and become leaders themselves. Many of the CEOs and founders in this chapter have become national leaders and have left great legacies that have continued to enhance their organizations.

The final chapter reviewed and analyzed the data from the training sessions completed with the Class Leaders of the church. This training consisted of learning the Class Leader system as designed by the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. Included in this training were discussions on building relationships with the members of the congregation that would extend to presenting elements such as radical hospitality and taking a risk in stepping out of one’s comfort zone to extend love. Key to this training was the connection and bond made between the Class Leaders during the six-class sessions. This training was designed to reorganize the Class Leader System for better communication and learning how to utilize effective methods for ministry.

CHAPTER ONE

MINISTRY FOCUS

Introduction

Writing this chapter is based upon what I have viewed as a need to revitalize and renew the emotional and health of this congregation. The need for renewal and revitalization was based upon observations of a decline in this church's membership. The community and the church suffered due to drugs, violence, lack of job opportunities, inadequate housing, and displaced persons. The same vices that plagued my life have also had an adverse reaction to this church and community. The current pastor is working diligently to rejuvenate the congregation and community through love, liberation, and life. I intend to work on a project that will bring those three elements back into this congregation.

The relationship between my ministry interest and skills and my context's needs will form the basis for a training project that will dramatically impact this church's growth. My expectations are to empower and encourage a congregation that would ensure the inclusion of all involved. The ending response would be great, leading people to become more involved in the life of this context.

The history of the community and Homewood African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church comments on the decline in a once prosperous community. The church appeared to culminate during the 1990s; however, drugs, low housing, and lack of job

opportunities within the city assisted in the dethroning of a city once considered a valuable and viable community.

Some congregation members expressed a lack of respect in conversation, and a spirit of anger and distrust existed. This observation reminded me of aspects in my own life that had an overall theme of not feeling like I belonged and not feeling welcomed in wanting to be a part of this new church family. Taking a leadership role in this context was somewhat tricky when trying to break through the cobwebs of the complexities this church had to offer. I observed people and how they treated one another. It was not the most pleasant experience, however, I knew I needed to learn what happened, who was responsible, when did it all happen, why it happened and how would I be able to help renew and revitalize the spirit of this context.

Homewood African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

History and Culture

Homewood African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, also known as (Homewood AMEZ Church), is an African American Methodist church located in the Homewood section of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. This church celebrated its new beginnings in 1871 which was seventy-five years after the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church organizations chartered. Homewood African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church was accepted into the Allegheny Annual Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion national organization, including churches from outlining counties and Allegheny County.

Due to financial issues, in 1932, the congregation was forced to leave the church on Dunfermline Street and moved to a storeroom at 517 North Homewood Avenue. Homewood African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church lost most of its members as they moved from place to place, but there were a few people who had a love of God in their hearts and were desperately in need of a new church home. Conditions steadily grew worse until they found themselves with no church home. There was a negotiation with the Building and Loan Association, and in September of 1936, the members triumphantly moved back to Tioga and Dunfermline Street. As noted in the church's history, the building currently housing the church was purchased, and growth began to occur. During the review of the history of this church, one will notice the church's central theme during its life span was bonded in faith and perseverance.

The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church was founded in 1796. The denomination was officially recognized in 1821. This organization consists of a general conference which is the supreme administrative body of the church fed by the district and annual conferences. Between meetings of the conference, the church is administered by the Board of Bishops. *The Book of Discipline* is the instrument for setting forth the laws, plan, polity, and process by which the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church governs itself.¹ Also known as “the Discipline,” it is used to guide the structure and execution of organizational leadership within the local church.

The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church *Book of Discipline* sets forth directives for pastoring. Out of the forty-six itemized directives for pastors the following are integral to understanding tenure and culture within the local church. Pastors in charge

ii. ¹ United Methodist Church, *Book of Discipline* (Charlotte, NC: United Methodist Church, 2008),

of a circuit or station are to have the oversight of all ministers, preachers, exhorters, and officials in his pastoral charge. They are to instruct in the doctrines and general rules of the church. They are also to enforce vigorously but calmly the rules of the church. The pastor is expected to maintain order and control while in his assignment.² It is important to note that pastoring in the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church is considered itinerant. Although the itinerant ministry is subject to one year, there are and have been some pastors serving for over twenty and even thirty years in leadership. Many of the congregants along with pastors who celebrate longevity had tendencies to grow as a family and develop bonds to becoming a society with their own cultural values. Homewood African Methodist Episcopal Zion church's history carries the mantle of having pastors with longevity developing family ties, bonds, and a culture of their own.

The Homewood African Methodist Episcopal Zion church had known only two pastors for a little over fifty years. From 1967 to 1996, Pastor A created a familial atmosphere where congregants felt a sense of safety and love that defined the way they served each other and the community. A level of familiarity was established between Pastor A and some of the congregants. Pastor A's leadership also established the culture within the church that was beneficial especially during the tumultuous times in the late 1960's. The leadership consisted of church leaders helping the pastor with maintaining a successful and prosperous religious institution. Organizations within the church planned activities and social engagements to ensure the church and community did not have to experience any dire wants or needs. Homewood African Methodist Episcopal Zion

² The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, *The Book of Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church* (Charlotte, NC: A.M.E. Zion Publishing House, 1996).

Church was a haven for feeding the poor, clothing those in need, providing financial support, and visibility in the community during this time. There were celebrations of weddings, childbirths, sharing in funeral services of members and friends, school graduations, and many other memorable moments in the span of twenty-nine-years.

Pastor A retired in 1996 at the behest of the bishop. Despite what felt like a sudden move, there were some members of the congregation who continued a relationship with Pastor A until his death in 2010.

As the governing body often and abruptly changes leadership roles and personnel, this congregation experienced the retirement of a great leader and welcomed new leadership in 1996. The new pastor of the church (Pastor B) arrived with great leadership qualities, was fluent and well-educated in the nuances of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church protocols and procedures. He was also a former military serviceman who took his job duties seriously as he did his pastoral assignments. He was not familiar with the culture of Homewood church and was not accustomed to overall processes that had been developed by the previous leadership and members. Just as Pastor B may have been unfamiliar with the established culture of the church many of the members were not prepared for a different leadership style. The new pastor was one who modeled the *Book of Discipline* as his guide for leadership. As Pastor B assumed the role, he was also appointed as the lead Presiding Elder, sometimes referred to as the overseer, of the overall Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania area of which the church belonged.

From the time of assignment by the governing body, the congregation was constantly and consistently reminded that their new pastor was sent to bring order and “break up the fallow ground.” Upon the arrival of Pastor B came much resistance and at

first his mode of service and presentation was rejected. It was not that the new pastor was inexperienced rather, that familiar and familial culture was now at war with the start of something new. The congregation at Homewood African Methodist Episcopal Zion was being pivoted from a familiar leadership style to what seemed to be a completely opposite approach. Although the governing body intended to use godly judgement when assigning a pastor, some congregants began to feel unloved, devalued, and unprotected within the body of Christ.

The need for order (as defined by the denomination) is always necessary, but it also disrupted the familial and familiar culture of the church. Aside from creating a culture of love and safety, pastors are ultimately held responsible for the spiritual growth of the people and the church. Annually, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church assesses these things through reports to episcopal leadership by way of the Annual Conference. Reporting had shown over the years that the church was not growing numerically. The need for denominational order did not continue the old familiar culture. Many felt this change facilitated a loss cohesiveness in the church and they began to struggle with maintaining connection and participation at the same level. The old culture could not be replicated, and some wondered if the old could somehow be restored. There were underlying issues that hindered the ability of Pastor B and the congregation to move forward in the same way. This included processes and conversations about why the new pastor had been assigned, the familial culture inhibiting the people's ability to receive new teachings, and their inability (unwillingness in some cases) to receive love in a new form or fashion. This church was started in 1871 and through the years there had been

other pastors assigned to this church. New assignments were not the problem. During this transition, it was the culture that many felt was being attacked.

In 2010, the retired leadership passed away and many of the members experienced a continuation of loss. While Pastor B continued to hold on to his position, he had to transition the congregation from grief to healing while experiencing his own challenges. There was little time for self-care and follow-up for himself and his family. From 2010 to 2019, the church experienced many changes. From changes to the order of Sunday service program, to the deletion of some annual days from the church calendar, and the addition or release of officials from duty, and some members left the church. In addition, rules and regulations were added and adopted as protocol so the church could carry on in compliance with the denominational expectation of order. A newly designed mission and vision statement was drawn up by Pastor B and the remaining members. Though things were not exactly the way they had been under Pastor A, relationship and culture improved over the years. The church began to celebrate its heritage through various programs. In 2018 a new idea was implemented with “Selfie Sunday,” having all attendees post to social media with a hashtag acknowledging Homewood African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. Global Missions Sunday for sharing and caring was held each year. Also implemented was a Back to Church Sunday inviting former members and current friends to spend a special day with the pastor and members.

The church was determined to operate in excellence as they celebrated District and Annual Conferences, Men and Women Days. A Saturday worship experience was implemented during Pittsburgh’s marathons to avoid the Sunday activities of the city’s programming schedule along with special Resurrection Day and Maundy Thursday

services. In 2018, vandals attempted to destroy the church, but the congregation remained resilient and continued to engage in worship and praise. During Pastor B's tenure a male choir "Men of No Excuses" was birthed and ministered on various Sundays throughout the year. A new culture and a new day provided this congregation with a bright and shiny future.

Unfortunately, in the latter months of 2018 and into 2019, Pastor B became ill. The church continued to proceed as outlined in the protocols of the *Book of Discipline* and an associate minister was able to maintain the Sunday worship experience. In April of 2019, Pastor B passed away. Once again, this congregation suffered a great loss as well as the community of Homewood. Not being able to fully recover from this astronomical situation, the congregation had to rebound quickly in preparing for a funeral, the transition of Pastor B's family and anxiously await a new pastor to be assigned at the upcoming Annual Conference. This was more than overwhelming to this congregation. The stages of grief reared its ugly head again and the congregation struggled to comprehend what was happening to them.

Almost immediately, Pastor C arrived. The congregation was thrown into another wave of transition. Pastor C was young and vibrant. His social work skills and abilities provided the congregation an opportunity to work through love, liberation, and life. In other words, he affirmed what both previous pastors had initiated in the church. Both Pastor A and Pastor B had offered love, safety, and protection in their own way but through different lenses. Pastor C modeled each previous administration by including love along with denominational order and initiating a healthy and safe environment within the culture of the church. He did not dictate or demand. He led with grace and

elegance. Still, it would take hard work and consistency to move the congregation to a place of trust that would allow them to be fully receptive to another abrupt shift in leadership style.

In the spring of 2020, the pandemic hit the nation and the church had to rethink and regroup as they prepared to minister to the church and community in what is now called the “new normal.” The new normal added another emotional thread for the congregation. Many were elderly and did not have access to the social media platform. Knowing families were used to connection and relationship, Pastor C and his wife took on the task of teaching and training the elderly about social media. Further, to keep the congregation engaged, a teleconference phone tree was established. Pastor C’s attempt to include all worked well. Nine months into his leadership role and in the height of multiple pandemics, Pastor C decided to include the whole church in his plan to maintain safety, protection, and provide a loving environment for all. Class leaders and officers of the church were given the responsibility of making sure all members had what they needed to survive during this season. This was a wonderful opportunity to merge ministries to accomplish two common goals, being safety and health.

Pastor C worked with church leadership and the different ministries to protect the membership as it relates to health. Medical supplies and other health-related supplies were made available for any in need. During the late spring of 2021, the church was reopened using caution and safe protocols. The culture of the church did not change; however, processes and procedures were adhered to under the guidance of the governing body.

During the fall of 2021, the members received word from Pastor C that he and his wife were no longer together. This was a different sort of transparency and vulnerability from leadership that many of the members were not accustomed to. The members supported their pastor and rallied around him to make sure he was safe and protected. The relational culture of the people connected with Pastor C to form a bond. This type of love in action helped the church to continue to build and progress.

Pastor C was able to connect and affirm the previous administration's platform while maintaining a healthy and vibrant ministry. Through his administration the church grew membership numerically in person and by viewership in the hybrid worship services. Financially, the church grew and was able to complete much needed interior and exterior work. One of his goals, during his tenure at Homewood African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church was to open a library in Pastor B's honor. This process was received well and the former first family was given a plaque during morning service as the overflow hall was dedicated in Pastor B's memory. This offered some a breakthrough and healing posture for the church as they remembered Pastor B's work. Pastor C offered many opportunities for this congregation to grow and expand. His training consisted of on-the-job training. Pastor C's leadership style also cultivated a new level of spiritual growth within the membership that was evident through new and revitalized ministries within the church.

In the spring of 2023, Pastor C announced that he was being reassigned to another conference in another state. Even though there was not much time to prepare for his departure, the church was not left in a lonely spot or desperate position. This time they were better prepared for a new opportunity. Previous ministries that had dwindled during

the early months of 2019 were reorganized and restructured. The congregation rallied together to assist with making sure the denomination's protocol remained in place, as well as the continuation of ministerial services that were needed.

Abrupt leadership changes continued to affect the congregation, especially with the older members. Senior may no longer be able to attend Sunday morning services. Those individuals with technological challenges relating to social media and conference call details have felt they are left out of the loop as active participants. The Holy Communion service has also been one of disconnect and has left homebound members separated and divided from the church because of decisions made by the governing body. The ruling requires all parties must be present and the streaming platform of the morning service ends at the start of this ritual. Changes in visitation schedules affected those in hospitals and at home experiencing health challenges continues to be an interruption for members due to the revolving door of leadership. During the review of the history of this church, one will notice the church's central theme during its life's span was bonded in faith and perseverance.

Each pastor that has been addressed in the history and culture section of the context was committed to pastoral care. Each had his own perspective and process as he matriculated through his leadership role. Marvin McMickle identified three concentric circles that are needed in the life of a church where leadership works along with the congregation as he equips them for ministry. Often, pastors have led believing they have to do everything by themselves because of the misleading of directions provided by set or guided methodologies. As mentioned previously in the history and culture section of the

context, the responsibilities and duties of a pastor were outlined for each leadership assignment through the *Book of Discipline*.

Each pastor has had a love for God, the church, the community and provided as much safety and protection as possible. McMickle suggested in his book *Caring Pastor, Caring People*, the church leadership is fading in the communities and church growth is on a decline.³ The itinerant ministry approach in the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church continues to reopen unhealed wounds with no surety or guarantee that each abrupt change in leadership will provide wholeness in the now and then.

McMickle introduced his audience to three concentric circles of care indicating “first pastors must assume the appropriate role of pastor, practicing and equipping others for pastoral care. Second, the congregation must exercise mutual pastoral care within the faith community. Finally, the congregation must assume pastoral care responsibility for its neighbors.”⁴

Within the parameters of the circle of care, pastors and congregations also have the responsibility of providing love, safety, and protection to each other and to the community. Through writers McMickle mentioned in his book, the reading audience is reminded how God used leaders in the Old Testament as shepherds who like Moses and David protected their flocks. Shepherds took on the task of being committed to their duties. They understood their assignments and as the pastors of this context understood theirs. McMickle also mentioned Steward Hiltner who compared the work of a shepherd

³ Marvin Andrew McMickle, *Caring Pastors, Caring People* (King of Prussia, PA: Judson Publishing, 2011), 70.

⁴ McMickle, “*Caring Pastors, Caring People*, 52.

as pastoral care.⁵ To take this discussion further McMickle added Timothy Laniak's description of a shepherd as how God had related to Israel and to the community of faith, and as the way of describing leaders within the faith community.⁶

McMickle's stated, "It is because we care for the people of God that we preach, pray, visit, comfort, console, preside a weddings and funerals, perform baptisms and christenings, and represent and advocate for the sheep in places far beyond the wall of the local church."⁷ Homewood African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church has learned in a team environment through the newly organized ministerial team and church leaders' teams to operate in the manner McMickle has outlined in his three concentric circles. The Class Leader system was organized, and individuals trained through the direction and guidance of the *Book of Discipline* to reach within the current membership and within the community to create the atmosphere of a church without walls.

My Ministry Journey

For many years I have observed Homewood AMEZ Church at a distance. Once I accepted the offer to work as the Minister of Music for the worship experience, I overheard conversations between all too familiar members. These conversations were filled with abusive language, anger, and hurt. I asked myself what made this ministry operate in this manner and still be relevant to the church. Entertainment had taken the place of ministry. There was only ridicule, division among the members, and no building

⁵ McMickle, *Caring Pastors, Caring People*, 506.

⁶ McMickle, *Caring Pastors, Caring People*, 514.

⁷ McMickle, *Caring Pastors, Caring People*, 620.

of the kingdom through the worship experience. Entertaining the congregants had come to an end. The members of the worship ministry and the attendees were no longer participating through worship. There was no connection to God. Nor was there any connection with the people.

The next question I pondered was to ask myself why this ministry was not flowing and connecting to the congregation and the community. During my lifetime, I have always been the type of person who wanted everybody to love me. I often did not receive the same type of love I was giving out, but I kept pushing, believing there was someone out there who knew the actual meaning of love. I grew up thinking that certain people would change and that I would be patient or naïve enough to think this change would occur.

I became involved in ministry as a young teen attending Sunday School and joining the youth choir. I loved singing and loved interacting with people, and that is what brought me joy. At the age of sixteen, I was encouraged to join the gospel choir and was the youth choir musician. I was taught by Sunday School teachers, choirmasters, and ministers of the gospel. I, too, became a teacher and leader during my late teen years.

Even though being a teacher and a leader in worship was an enjoyable venture, I realize now that I was entertaining the people and not inviting them to Christ and what he had to offer. I had a love for singing and being a musician. I did not know what it meant. Giving my life to Christ at the age of twenty was my covering for salvation, but entertaining the people became more dominant in my life as I grew through the years.

A disciplined life gives direction and does not lead down a destructive path. That is not part of God's plan for anyone who wants to live in submission. God continued to

work his plan in my life as I surrender more of myself to him. In the history of the city of Homewood and the history of Homewood African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, I am not surprised to see the many elements of their past that lead both myself and the church to this point in history.

I have pastored various congregations through the years and have seen the plight of the people unemployed, homeless, financially, and economically struggling. These atrocities of life have left some hopeless, while there are those who still cling to the church express a different kind of faith and hope in God. My experiences as a child, teenager, young adult, and now a mature adult, have allowed me to minister to others who have gone through situations or circumstances such as I have experienced.

Unhealthy relationships have taught me that everyone does not love everybody. Also, there would be times when no one would apologize for the hurts or pains one had caused on others. Learning how to lead with a servant's heart has always been my desire. Pastoring afforded me an opportunity to meet people who had experienced feelings of not being loved when needed the most. During my tenure at Caldwell African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church in a small town outside of Pittsburgh and was my first assignment. I learned to listen to those who wanted to have a voice in their lives. It was at this church I began a prison ministry enjoyed being mentored by mature members who were knowledgeable with the African Methodist Episcopal Zion process. Very soon after my arrival, members began to express how they wanted to be loved. This first assignment was only the beginning of great things that were in store for me.

John Wesley African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church in Uniontown, Pennsylvania was my second pastoral assignment to intentionally connect to the youth

and work with them. Some parents did not take kindly to the children being involved within the congregation. However, I continued to assist where needed by sponsoring a Back-to-School community school supply give-a-way to bring the people together. During this pastoral assignment, I learned that people wanted to have a voice and wanted to be free to serve. The processing of love continued to be the thread that kept me going. The people were teaching me how to love myself as we journeyed through our process in Uniontown. This church grew in a matter of months. I was excited to see the progress and my own growth. This church had been known to have many affluent people attending this church in the past. During the 1980s and 1990s, the steel mills and the many factories in surrounding areas closed. This area became a plight of drugs, violence, homeless, alcohol and drug addictions, and almost financial ruin. It was hard getting the people to trust and love the church, but this congregation was being prepared for its next leadership experience.

My third pastoral assignment was held at St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church in Carnegie, Pennsylvania, for approximately eight months between 2000 and 2001. The former pastor had resigned from the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church to start another community ministry. There were approximately four die-hard members left who were angry and distraught because of the church's fall. Even though the former pastor had prepared them for his departure, it all fell on deaf ears. These people felt betrayed and lost all trust in the church. Older members left the church and did not return. As for me, I felt abandoned and lost as I tried to work on my personal situations and hold together a church where only my children and one other person attended.

Shortly after this assignment was completed, I joined a church in the Pittsburgh area. I became a member, taught the youth, and joined the music ministry. Subsequently, I held the position as a minister of music for almost twelve years. I continued working within the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church as the local conference Evangelism Director. It was in this position I enjoyed meeting new people and other female clergy members. I became more involved in using my gifts and talents as a teacher, musician, and spiritual leader to grow in our local area.

My life experiences and training gave me opportunities to grow teams and ministries that have enhanced my skills. Knowing I had to face some loveless situations and watching members of various congregations going through the same scenarios has forced me to look at what life has taught me and grow from there instead of wallowing in the past.

I eventually realized that I had not allowed myself to love like I wanted to be loved. However, these informative years have taught me how to love myself and about God and how he loved us, gave all that he had through his son Jesus Christ so that I might live eternally. Watching my friends and family members struggle gave me the insight to do more and to love more in these desperate times. I had to learn how to start over with an open mind on love without expecting it in return. Being able to start over has helped me immensely. As I have walked through my life story, I realized that poor decisions did not kill me. I have learned from them. Having an undisciplined life did not annihilate my life. These decisions helped me to see who I was and assisted me in planning better. Learning how to love unconditionally is what I am still working on. I thank God for life and another day to do better because I know better.

During one of the doctoral peer-mentoring sessions held at United Theological Seminary, my mentor asked me if I ever loved or been in love, and my response was that I had not. I am learning not to expect to receive what others cannot give in return. There have been times I have crossed the line, only looking at the crowd numbers, the money, the reports, the prestige, and the title. I have since learned that God is better than that.

I intend to transform people from a lack of trust to express authentic relationships through love and, hopefully, commitment to this congregation. My ministry interests are to build upon what is already existing in this context raising not only the awareness of the church leaders but also to implement change from unhealthy to a vibrant and healthy congregation.

The context of Homewood African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church has great potential. This congregation is full of multiple talented and gifted people who will enhance the process. My history includes working with various organizations within the church. They include the music ministry, missionaries, class leaders, Sunday school and bible studies. Included also along within this context I have facilitated ministries training highlighting how to treat people with kindness, love the people as if they were my own, and love what they do. The elements of a fruitful ministry are all encompassed with love and commitment.

This project will assist me to utilize information for encouragement and team building for Homewood African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. Training will give this congregation an opportunity to experience and realize their potential to be more effective and relevant as they minister to the members and the community.

In this context, I have been assigned as associate minister and minister of music for a year and still learning the people, how they minister personally, and finding out each week what makes this ministry vital to them. There are members of the worship ministry who are not singers but like to participate. Others have an interest in the worship ministry because they enjoy singing. A couple of members felt they needed to fit somewhere and decided to become a part of the worship experience. My task is to draw the talent out and the gifts together as one on a spiritual level. My ministry interests and skill levels reference to previous positions as a former Sunday school teacher, class leader, minister of music for various churches, a clinician for gospel music workshops, a general education teacher, and a pastor.

In the *Seven Practices of Effective Ministry* written by Andy Stanley, Reggie Joiner, and Lane Jones, one of the many postures in the ministry leadership focuses on whom I am trying to reach and not whom I would want to keep.⁸ My purpose would be to reach individuals who have a desire to engage and to develop a ministry balance. Also, I intend to grow the ministry for new leadership potential within the church.

Another exciting process in this context is being able to guide the members through rethinking how and why they do the things they do as a ministry. Instead of continually thinking from within themselves, I will continue to guide the members towards an inclusive posture. This ministry is mostly made up of members who are mature in age. In light of having a young pastor, a new media team, young adults are attending virtually and joining the church weekly. There are already new types of music being presented to the congregation, changes in how church worship is being introduced

⁸ Andy Stanley, Reggie Joiner, and Lane Jones, *Seven Practices of Effective Ministry* (Colorado Springs, CO: Multnomah Books, 2004), 11.

to this "new normal," and the new theme is love, liberation, and life. The new theme has had a radical and intentional format for inviting others outside of the congregation to become part of the new church setting.

In his book, Andy Stanley and his writers provide their readers a commentary between two men, Ray and Pete who attend a major league baseball game. In this commentary writers stated, “millions of outsiders see the church as irrelevant, and the church is characterized as insiders reaching insiders. Intentionality will be used as a strategy to listen to what the outsiders are saying they hear.”⁹ Since working with this ministry, I had many outsiders give me their opinion on what they hear from the congregation, and it has been a learning experience. That is where Stanley and the writers mention pressure. “Outsiders will put pressure on ministries. This pressure will be considered learning milestones to build a better ministry, a more transparent and concise sound in music, and a more diverse team.”¹⁰

Homewood's history reminds me of my life personal story consisting of many life struggles and detours along the way. On the one hand, trusting others could be difficult and working on being successful and remaining relevant could be a challenge as this church has experienced. At one time many have experienced joblessness, living in less than adequate housing, and various acts of violence can leave one with little hope and minimal trust.

Just like the city of Homewood's people suffered economically, Homewood African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church has suffered from the impact of violence,

⁹ Stanley, Joiner, and Jones, *Seven Practices of Effective Ministry*, 143.

¹⁰ Stanley, Joiner, and Jones, *Seven Practices of Effective Ministry*, 150.

drugs, alcoholism, economic plight with a decline in attendance and a decline in the worship experience. The struggle to maintain a high standard of performing and traveling had finally ended around the mid-1990s. Residents were relocated to other areas. Some joined other places of worship or decided not to attend services at all. My decision to relocate was an attempt to leave the old and included my desire to want to do better and make a better life for me and my children. In my first attempt to relocate, I became a victim of racism on moving day and had to regroup and seek other housing. An unemployed black woman with two children looking for housing in Pittsburgh was not an easy task.

What has been written about Homewood's city's plight has too often been my story throughout the years. As I continue to review my life story, I, too, had plans for revitalization and growth in my life. However, plans do not always have a straight and narrow path. My life was full of ups and downs but never stopped my desire to be revived, renewed, and rejuvenated. Like the Homewood community started making plans, many things have gotten in the way, and during the planning process, it has taken phases to implement progress and action. No different than what these two entities have gone through has been faithful to my life. My history revealed some areas where pieces did not fit together; monies were scarce and promises to change did not surface for quite a while during the young adult years.

Synergy Development

My spiritual journey, along with Homewood African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, connects through a song written by Graham Lyle and Terry Britten in 1984,

titled "What's Love Got To Do With It?" The chorus to this song states that love is just a second-hand emotion, and when you try to love, a heart can be broken.

This song was offered to many musicians and singers who decided not to record, was not allowed to record it, or simply rejected the song. After reviewing this song's short history, Tina Turner was the only one who achieved greatness singing and recording it and receiving awards for singing it. This song speaks volumes when one is out for entertainment purposes having no other meaning to doing something other than making money and becoming famous.¹¹

It appears that a lack of love and trust has impeded the growth of this church. These two components have become the song's mantra, as mentioned above. What's love got to do with it? This once-thriving church has lost trust in those who led and those who followed. The community had an open mind for change, growth, and financial wealth. However, people soon took to their own devices to survive because of the changes taking place. I will provide the congregation with the reason behind love and what it has to do with building healthy congregations.

Despite what has happened within the community and the church, John 3:16-17 (KJV) says, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world and save the world through him." God's word has never changed, and we have turned to other gods, other methods to please ourselves and forget our first love. There has been a detachment between God and Homewood African

¹¹ Tina Turner, "Tina Turner - What's Love Got To Do With It (Official Music Video)," March 13, 2009, music video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oGpFcHTxjZs>.

Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. What happened when the singing was over, and the entertainment to the people was over? There was no follow up for salvation. There may have been an invitation to join the church or perhaps an invitation to give one's life to Jesus, but there were little to no converts.

Worship begins with a holy encounter. It is personal up-close contact with God. A worshipper glorifies God with his heart trusting and believing who and what God is. Elmer Towns wrote in the spiritual foundation of Church growth, “we worship God with our regenerated spirit. John 4:23 being his reference. Towns continued saying we worship God with our renewed mind Romans 12:2 being his reference, and we worship God with our revived emotions Colossians 2:23 his reference.”¹²

These transformational references lead to relationships that are built in love and trust. A holy encounter leads to a love encounter with God. The process in creating a worship ministry built on the principles of God's word involves leadership, providing a biblical understanding of who God is and what He is to those who intend to serve him through this ministry at Homewood African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. While teaching the basics, a servant leader should always let his or her light so shine that when others look at them, they will see and feel a specific type of love that will be expressed throughout the process of building.

Consistency is one of the elements that is needed to build and provide cohesiveness with team building. Servant leaders not only show love; they live out the love principles of the Bible that express the purpose of why God sent his son. It is love that has to do with everything we do in the kingdom. Distractions and inconsistent

¹² Elmer Towns, *Foundations of Church Growth* (Bel Air, MD: Academy Publishing Services, Incorporated, 2005), 32.

lifestyles are what caught me off guard, and my leadership began to diminish the purpose for which I had been called.

Another element needed in building a healthy congregation is founded in each team member having a sense of belonging during the whole process. I am consistently reminded by God's love that we all have fallen short of the glory of God, and without embarrassment or feeling ashamed, God has allowed me to get out, step up, and move forward with my life. As I process through this project, I must keep in mind that no one is perfect, and we should all follow the same format once we know better, then we do better.

Conclusion

The answer to the question of what's love got to do with this is everything. This context has entertained many conventions, conferences, and programs at various colleges and seminaries down through the years, and it had been fruitful in ministering the gospel to the people. It can once again gain the reputation of effectively leading others to Christ in a way that guides people to the kingdom of God, and it has never been intended for material gain.

This research chapter intends to connect the people to God's word that will last day to day, week to week, and for a lifetime. The process will include questions to the congregation, listeners on the conference call lines, viewing through social media, and conversations via direct contact. These various questions will be submitted as a survey seeking answers or guidelines for the leadership to ponder how things could be done best or better for the church's growth.

Questions may include, but not limited to how did you become a class leader?

Have you ever collaborated with other class leaders in the church to conduct meetings or facilitate training with members? What is important to you as a class leader? What are you trying to do better in this ministry? Why do you continue in your role as a Class Leader? What would you like to see happen with the Class Leader System?

CHAPTER TWO

BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

There will always be oppression, division, and strife among the people who are believers. Paul states in 1 Corinthians 12:31 there is a more excellent way.¹ This biblical foundation chapter reflects what Paul was addressing in 1 Corinthians 13:1-6, where love is the more excellent way or better way. Paul continues his conversation in 1 Corinthians chapter thirteen by providing a strategy or guide on how one should live out his or her life daily. Obedience is the critical element in the process of glorifying God.

This foundation chapter include discussions relating to Old Testament situations where disobedience led to God's chosen leaders' death and destruction. Those chosen leaders did not love or care for the people. The New Testament scripture text reflects how division and strife led to death and the church's destruction from within her walls. Both situations happened because of a lack of glorifying God and disobedience to the teachings of God's word. Each scenario in this foundation chapter displays the behaviors of people who believed they were above God and God's directive.

Congregations, families, or a team working as one unit includes all members involved no matter what position one holds. Families and teams will include the good,

¹ Biblical citation will be from the New Revised Standard Version, unless otherwise stated, 1 Corinthians 12:31.

bad, and the ugly. Also included in this group could be the wealthy, poor, business, and non-working individuals, politicians, and advocates. There may be some who have fallen through the cracks of life like thieves, robbers, murderers, liars, those with addictions, and alternative living individuals, to name a few.

Nevertheless, everyone deserves to be treated fairly and wants to feel included. Mark states in the third chapter of his book in the twenty fifth verse, "And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand" (Mk. 3:25, NIV). In both the Old and New Testament scenarios provided in this chapter, it was rich versus the poor or, better put, the haves and the have nots. The religious privileged appear to respond only to the beat of their drums.

The two scenarios from the biblical perspective in this chapter reflect the lack of respect and honor for God and God's people. When there is division among the people, a congregation will suffer in growth both in numbers and spiritual maturity. One family group had been chosen to reign as priests for as long as they wish under the guidance of God, who had a high priest leading the family and the people. Another family group or church congregation was under the guidance of a spiritual leader who took his work seriously. The sons who also held positions of high authority in the temple, did what was pleasing to them. This attitude caused ~~the~~ those who congregated at the temple to suffer a significant loss, and people either withdrew from the church or continued to suffer under the disrespect and lack of honor to God.

Eli, the High Priest, was chosen by God along with his family to head the temple. Paul was a believer whose life had been turned upside down from persecutor to proclaimer. Both men believed in what they did. Both men believed they were chosen to

be servants of God. Although good in their leadership skills, there were followers who deemed it necessary to work for their own good instead of ensuring God was getting the glory from their servanthood position.

The main theme for this project is “The Way of Love” as expressed by Paul in the New Testament. I have also included the Old Testament, 1 Samuel, to illustrate strong leaders having trained associates who chose to live out their leadership assignments doing as they pleased and not adhering to the mandates of God’s word.

New Testament

Historical Analysis and the People of Corinth – I Corinthians

Corinth's history and its people are vital to the biblical foundation of Paul's letters to Corinth. The culture was also vital in how the people were responding to Paul's teachings of the scripture and the call of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in their lives. To understand the nature of the people before the prospect of serving one God, its history is paramount to where this city and its people stood at the time of Paul's ministry.

This section of the chapter will give a backdrop of what has greatly influenced the Church at Corinth even though the city's beginnings were included. Joseph Fitzmyer comments that Corinth was seated in a strategic location that dominated two harbors.² Fitzmyer writes that Corinth's earlier history started with the Dorian invasion of the Peloponnesus in the tenth century B.C. These and many other profit-making enterprises helped to make Corinth a great city and business center. However, this wealth did not last

² Joseph A. Fitzmyer, “First Corinthians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary,” *The Anchor Yale Bible* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 22.

long. Many rulers served this great metropolis, and the city continued to prosper until 146 B.C. Roman military defeated the city, killed all the male citizens, sacked, burned, and razed to the ground.³

Between 107-143 B.C., Cicero states Corinth had some people who lived among the city's ruins with some resemblance of the ancient coins, pottery, and glassware still existing. Julius Caesar rebuilt the city in 44 B.C. restoring old buildings and building new ones. Corinth is now wholly Roman oriented. By 7 B.C. Corinth had become the capital, sponsored the Isthmian Games, Caesarian Games, and the Imperial Contests. Corinth became the seat of the proconsul governing the Roman province of Achaia when Paul first visited and evangelized.⁴

Corinth developed to be a great city after battles won and battles lost. The influence of many gods was honored through the erection of buildings and statues throughout many rulers' times. From the Hellenes to the dialect of Greek and Latin to a full array of Roman culture was the constant during Paul's time. The author of the *Anchor Bible Commentary* states that Paul wrote two of his letters to the church at Corinth in Greek.

Up to this portion of the history of Corinth, there is no set religious domination mentioned. Fitzmyer mentions the secular thinking among his congregants came from the Epicurean teaching, Stoic tenets, and the Sophists' rhetoric. The Greek philosophy and the culture were affecting the Christian of Corinth.⁵

³ Fitzmyer, "First Corinthians," 22.

⁴ Fitzmyer, "First Corinthians," 22.

⁵ Fitzmyer, "First Corinthians," 22.

With so many cultures and diversity within the city and with people referred to as aliens bringing in their customs, cultures, and religions, Paul had to address the church to remind them of their commitment to God's call upon their lives. The *Anchor Bible Commentary* states Paul strived among this incredible metropolis of people spreading the word of God. Paul enjoyed challenges and took those challenges seriously as he attempted to spread the good news of Jesus Christ.

The issues and concerns in the church may have possibly been connected to the various cultures and diversity within the community. Frey gives his readers a view of how the communities were set up. There were some large congregations, and there were small congregations with their means of worship, economic standing, and social status. Some personal homes were used as well as larger meeting venues. People generally established their own rules and regulations related to such things as dietary and purity laws. The general complaints in the letters and communications from his leaders in Corinth varied from context to context. Each believed his or her interpretation of Paul's teachings was correct.

Understanding Paul's life as a Jew and his transformed life as a church planter are vital to his leadership abilities and strategic plan to build a church in such a large metropolis. Jörg Frey's article utilizes Paul's address to the people as written in Acts chapters twenty-two and twenty-three to give his readers some background as to Paul's identity. This information that Paul gives firsthand collectively addresses his leadership ability, knowledge of the people at the church of Corinth and provides firsthand historical information before and after conversion.⁶ In these two chapters, Paul introduces himself.

⁶ Jörg Frey, *Paul: Life, Setting, Work, Letters* (London, UK: A Continuum Imprint, 2012), 57, <http://dx.doi.org.dtl.idm.oclc.org/10.5040/9780567660985>.

Frey provides his readers with a historical account of Paul's life. Paul was educated under the teachings of Gamaliel. He had a rich cultural background. He lived as a Pharisee and was raised in Jerusalem.⁷ In brief, Paul knew his congregation well. He even reminded them of his transformation from violence against God's people to engaging them and empowering them through the gospel.

Paul

Paul's life before and after conversion encompassed how he lived, taught, and followed through with his mission for spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ. *The Britannica* gives its readers a snapshot of who Paul was and how he conducted himself, whether with the Jews or the Gentiles. Eva-Marie Becker's article provides her readers with six characteristics of Paul. His writing was intentional and deliberate, teaching with understanding. Paul was well able to explain and consider his ability to go through times of suffering and illness. Paul could eloquently describe his point of view on the communities and reflect on the issues and concerns of ministries in opposition. Paul reminds his congregation about the church's ministry in his letters to be continuously reminded about purpose. Paul was uniquely aware of his freedom from the law and his freedom to serve God without restriction. Eva-Marie Becker states that Paul manifested a pronounced awareness of himself and who he was as a Christian and leader.

Paul's leadership effectiveness included teaching and guiding them through the letters he had written to the church. He treated all his congregants, including the leadership, as one body in Christ. He had trouble leading the people on Christlike

⁷ Frey, *Paul: Life, Setting, Work, Letters*, 57.

principles. It was evident that culture, individualism, and diversity together provided an atmosphere of tension. In other words, Eva-Marie Becker considered the thought that Paul was caught in between a rock and a hard place. The two divisions appeared to be the rock of the Jews and the hard place, the Romans. With all the differences in opinions, Paul was hard-pressed, attempting to bring the atmosphere of love among the people, which caused some to feel mightier than others.⁸

The Letter to the Church – 1 Corinthians 12:31-13:13

Marion L. Soards states that Paul writing these letters to address issues that had caused division among the church members. Paul's concerns were not unlike those that have been observed down through the years and scriptures in both the Old Testament and the topic of this discussion in the New Testament. There was arguing, forming cliques over issues, i.e., social status of the members.⁹ Soards continues saying, "To make matters worse, there were issues with sexual immorality, marriage, divorce, and eating foods associated with pagan gods." Other areas of concern were the status of spiritual gifts and the practice of those gifts, lack of orderly behavior, arguments about the resurrection of the dead, and a collection that Paul was assembling to relieve the poor in Jerusalem.¹⁰

⁸ Eva-Marie Becker, *Paul: Life, Setting, Work, Letters* (London, UK: A Continuum Imprint, 2012), 122, <http://dx.doi.org.dtl.idm.oclc.org/10.5040/9780567660985>.

⁹ Marion L. Soards, "1 Corinthians," *New International Biblical Commentary: New Testament Series* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999), 6.

¹⁰ Soards, "1 Corinthians," 6.

This project is designed to bring awareness to those who will be participants of the importance of working in unity instead of being on opposite sides. There is a need to create a more harmonious environment within the church family. Although Paul's church in Corinth was young, there were issues and concerns starting in the leadership that caused division and strife. Spiritual arrogance among those who claimed to be elite was not an attitude Paul approved of, and the church was dying because of it.

This project's argument is to address the long-lasting question "What's love got to do with it"? As Paul put it, love, or the more excellent way, has everything to do with the reason why God sent his son. There will always be teaching opportunities to remind the people of Jesus' sacrifice that we might have life abundantly and eternally.

Jealousy among the members of the church appeared to be one of the most compounding situations. Paul's response to all of them was intended to let them know that everyone in the body was essential and no one person was higher than another. He also expounded on love as the perfect gift to possess no matter what gifts of the Spirit they were endowed with. The article continued to teach on how the resurrection of Jesus Christ was paramount to salvation.¹¹

Josip Bosnjakovic's article on wounds of the church was descriptive of what Homewood African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church experienced. When speaking of the wounds on the body of Christ being a part of God's identity, the church view is that of Jesus and that of the church experience hurt and abuse as well. Vulnerability is described as being opened to injury.¹²

¹¹ Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, "Letters of Paul to the Corinthians," Encyclopedia Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Th-Letter-of-Paul-to-the-Corinthians>.

During the itinerant ministry with the changing of leadership, Homewood African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church has undergone exposure to hurt and abuse. However, the exposure did not necessarily originate from the pastors. Those who followed the readings on the life of Christ would venture to say that the abuse and hurt he felt did not come from just the leaders of the church. Romans 3:23 NRSV states “all have come short of the glory of God.” No one is exempt from failures and disobedience.

Bosnjakovic’s article addresses the state of the church when going through life experiences. These experiences will always include the good, the bad, and the ugly things in life. Not all hierarchical decisions are the best decisions. However, some decisions are made through assessments and at times through conversations. Not all abusive hurt is intentional. However, repeated actions may result in abusive outcomes. The actions were a result of feeling unprotected during the intrusive transitions.¹³

Bosnjakovic talks about recovery from abuse being possible through tenderness, compassion, empathy, spiritual monitoring of people on their path to recovery. One suggestion included looking back over the history of the church and how it prospered working by implementing new ways to continue the purpose of walking in obedience to God and not to man. The writer reminded his audience that God is in control and healing comes from God who enters into the heart of man through surrender and submission (Ps. 7:10).¹⁴

¹² “Definition of Vulnerability,” s.v. vulnerability, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/vulnerability?src=search-dict-box>.

¹³ Josip Bošnjaković, “Vulnerability of the Church Through Abuse of Power, Body and Conscience,” *Nova Prisutnost* XX, no. 2 (2022): 287–302, <https://doi.org/10.31192/np.20.2.4>.

¹⁴ Bošnjaković, “Vulnerability of the Church through Abuse of Power, Body and Conscience,” 287–302.

Discussions associated with love, safety, and protection are intertwined with words such as tenderness and compassion. When speaking of applying tenderness in the fight for recovering from hurt and abuse, McMickle responds by saying, “To the extent that power always seeks control, closeness, and security, the tenderness revolution is resilient and responds to any regime of pressure, hardness, fear, and separation with the intent of creating a society open to joy, in which life calls life in a long-term community-building endeavor.”¹⁵ In other words, there is an attitude to be exhibited by those who are hurting in order to fight for the joy once shared by the congregation. The culture and history of the context has injected grace into the process of healing as well. The overall important factor in this article is that we cannot do evil for evil but must concentrate on healing through the word of God so that the church can become a healing station for those within the walls of the church and for those living in the community.

First Corinthians 12:31 outlined by Paul in the New International Version Bible reads as follows: “Now eagerly desire the greater gifts. And yet I will show you the most excellent way.”¹⁶ After Paul spoke to the church about spiritual gifts, being one body with many gifts and no one goes undervalued. His purpose in writing this chapter was to let the people know that God had a purpose for each one of them, and no one was to be exalted higher than God. In the thirty-first verse, Paul indicates that he can show them a better way to receive from God. It was apparent to this writer that love, and trust were the missing elements or standards to live by.

¹⁵ Bošnjaković, “Vulnerability of the Church through Abuse of Power, Body and Conscience,” 287–302.

¹⁶ Bible Hub Authors, “1 Corinthians 12:31,” Bible Hub, https://biblehub.com/1_corinthians/12-31.html.

By the time readers get to the thirty-first verse of the twelfth chapter of First Corinthians, the church at Corinth has undergone significant destruction spiritually. Paul addressed the "matters of everyday life of the Corinthians church."¹⁷ Despite his teachings and letters of instruction, the people continued to be disobedient and divided. Back to the basics is the main thrust of Paul's letter to the Church at Corinthians. The overall gist of Marion Soards words points out the basis of the gospel message runs prevalent throughout the text leading up to the more excellent way.¹⁸

Paul then moves into the following flow of his ministering to the people to what has been titled "The Way of Love." First Corinthians 13:1-6 speaks as follows:

If I speak in the tongues of men or angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but does not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away (1 Cor. 13:1-6).

Moving from the end of chapter thirteen to the beginning, Paul relays to his church to not lean to their understanding, but to trust in God and depend upon him. The verses throughout this text allow the readers to see three apparent things. First, the gifts that were given to them were initially given by God. These gifts were spiritual and were to give God glory and not to glorify themselves. Secondly, many people have influence or leadership over others, but the influence is not oppressive and abusive. Paul explains to

¹⁷ Soards, "1 Corinthians," 6.

¹⁸ Soards, "1 Corinthians," 6.

his church that love does not hurt and does not get enjoyment out of hurting others.

Thirdly, Paul lets his people know that love lasts forever. There is no ending to God's love for us. Therefore, love must be extended to others in the same manner God has extended his love not only to the church but to all humanity.

Love has everything to do with how a man treats one another. From the beginning of time, after the fall of Adam, man has fallen repeatedly. However, God has redeemed humanity in the same manner. Why? Because of his love for the people, he created.

Paul writes to the church at Corinth about his concerns with attitudes and behaviors. According to Richard A. Horsley, Paul uses arguments through his writing of this letter to accomplish his objective and make his point about the people's actions. People were exhibiting behaviors like that of a child, acting more superior than others, including the strong versus the weak, and other themes playing around poor behavior. These behaviors caused much division in the church.¹⁹

Socially, the placement of this church within the gates of Corinth was Paul's strategic plan as one would describe as location, location, location. While still under the Roman rule, this Church was built surrounded by tourism, shipyards, the center of the trade population, the shores of commerce, and a very heavy political arena. Greek worship, Roman worship, the worship of the goddess Isis, and temples dedicated to Serapis, existed in this ever-growing city. The population included all branches of society, the poor, middle class, and wealthy socialites. Violence and displacement of

¹⁹ Richard A. Horsley, "1 Corinthians," *Abingdon New Testament Commentaries* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1998), 2.

citizens were on the rise, and slavery was another financial profit for those who owned it. Even the freed slaves were kept in minimal roles among the aristocrats.²⁰

The Worthy Bible Online Commentary's explanation regarding 1 Corinthians 12:31 requests of followers to seek after spiritual contributions to be used for the edifying of the kingdom of God. Man has his own desires, wants, and needs; however, God gives spiritual gifts to whom he desires. Additionally, the commentary narrative indicated that the more excellent way was an opportunity for believers to learn how to desire in a pure way. Gifts of the spirit were important to the kingdom, but followers were not using the gifts as opportunities to enhance the kingdom of God. This discussion was held as a precursor to Paul providing the meaning of love in 1 Corinthians 13.²¹

The Nave's Topical Bible separated its scripture text on love by identifying the recipients of love. They included love of children for parents, love of God, love of mankind for God, love of mankind for Jesus, love for Jesus, love of person to another person, love of money and love of parents for children. In each of these divisions in the *Topical Bible*, the scriptures direct mankind directly back to God through original purpose. First Corinthians chapter thirteen expounds on love from person to person.²²

Learning the principles of love through training in 1 Corinthians will enable the Class Leaders to provide servant leadership within the congregation by bringing purpose and effectiveness to the people of God. In the Bible.org blog about 1 Corinthians, the

²⁰ Richard A. Horsley, "1 Corinthians," 2.

²¹ Jamieson Robert, "1 Corinthians 12," Review of Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible," <https://worthy.bible/commentaries/commentary-critical-and-explanatory-on-the-whole-bible/commentary-on-1-corinthians-12>.

²² "New Nave's Topical Bible," Biblia, <https://biblia.com/books/newnaves>.

writer states Paul was addressing the root problem of pride among the members. The blog states, “They had their eyes on external things like eloquence, social status, ascetic practices, etc. and Paul explains that those things mean nothing in God’s kingdom.”²³ Instead of being the light, the church appeared to be a social club exhibiting inappropriate behaviors within the worship services and within the realm of the church foundation.

Peterson ends his commentary on 1 Corinthians chapter twelve by encouraging the followers in Corinth to remember who they are in the fellowship. He reminds the reader that they are Christ’s body. Competition continued to exist in the fellowship of believers. Each wanted to be more important or higher on the scale of importance just as they had attempted to place the spiritual gifts. Just as God has positioned apostles, prophets, teachers, miracle workers, healers, helpers, organizers, and those who spoke in tongues, in the body of Christ, they were positioned to bring the body into unity.²⁴ Ephesians 4:12 NRSV reads “To equip the saints for the work of the ministry, for building up the body of Christ.”

As 1 Corinthians unfolds, Paul provides his readers with an outline of the strategic plan of God. God used Paul and his associates to plant seeds, and water the Word of God within the life of the church. God gives the increase in every aspect of a believer’s life. However, growth is the key. The lack of maturity is the main thread that runs throughout the Book of Corinthians. Paul understands that leaders need more than just a few drops of milk to grow. There must be nourishment of a meal for growth. The Word of God was

²³ Bible Hub Authors, “1 Corinthians 12:31,” Bible Hub, https://biblehub.com/1_corinthians/12-31.htm.

²⁴ Eugene Peterson, “The Message: The Bible in Commentary Language,” Biblia, <https://biblia.com/books/the-messages>.

Paul's foundation for building the church. The first principle in the foundation Paul stated to his people included the identification of the people. They were to identify themselves as being the temple of Jesus Christ. Their bodies were to be dedicated to living out the guidelines and principles of God's word.

The church was being exposed for being fake and pretenders. After Paul started receiving communication regarding the division and strife among his people, he continued to teach them through letters and through the voice of the leaders he sent back to Corinth to admonish them for their behaviors. Paul continued to illustrate to the church how he and his fellow servants were living testimonies of servanthood leadership.

Old Testament

Analysis of I Samuel Eli, The Priest

Lewis Hughes' book on analysis of I Samuel draws a picture for his viewers to see Eli's love for God, his position, and his family. His need for protecting the temple when Hannah came before him was exhibited in his reaction to her behaviors he believed were out of control. Once he listened to her story, he was in a better position to access and provide him to raise and guide. This leader had provided Hannah all she needed to realize how much she trusted him and God to give her son away for life in the priesthood.²⁵

Lewis Hughes depiction of the relationship between Eli, the priest and his sons did not address the need or the ability to protect his family or the temple participants in

²⁵ Lewis Hughes, "Analysis of the First Book of Samuel," Google Books, https://books.google.com/books?id=2FoHAAAQAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false.

his reaction to the warnings sent by God. Hannah showed her appreciation and reception to the prophet Eli. Hughes' depiction of the sons of Eli illustrated to his readers were the opposite of love, protection, and safety. The author stated, "By their lust and rapacity they had made Israel disgusted with them."²⁶ This nineteenth century analysis by Lewis Hughes discussed the warnings Eli was given by a man of God and by Samuel. God's love was always present even in warning Eli about the downfall of his family. God continued to protect the people despite their disobedience. God used the child Samuel to give him a second warning. Hannah was given a prophecy and she adhered to it.

Historically, Israel had fallen into sin again. Their disobedience was evidence of the leadership's inability to maintain Godly order. God's word was the order of the day and for a lifetime. Terry J. Betts remarked on how historical events, social environment, and social influences affected the balance of what God called forth to maintain his kingdom reign. Betts commented in his book about the primary responsibility of the priest was to be custodian of the Tōrā.²⁷ One theologian mentioned by Betts was R. D. Nelson. He started Nelson's *Raising Up a Faithful Priest: Community and Priesthood of Biblical Theology*, points to modern day theology as it points to the effects relationships within the community and the relationship of the community of God.

With the priestly responsibilities being established by God, Betts pointed out that priests were teachers. Many of the writers mentioned in this book expressed the job duties of the priests. Terms used were "natural guardians of the law," responsible for the

²⁶ Lewis Hughes, "Analysis of the First Book of Samuel," Google Books, https://books.google.com/books?id=2FoHAAAAQAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false.

²⁷ Terry J. Betts, "Ezekiel the Priest," Google Books, 1, https://www.google.com/books/edition/Ezekiel_the_Priest/mTxmJpdAuwoC?hl=en&gbpv=1&bsq=te%20analysis.

elements and rituals in the temple, pillars of the religious community, and used as prophets to speak the Word of God.²⁸ These writers expanded on the meaning of the priests for readers to gain better insight into their purpose and position in the Old Testament.

1 Samuel 2 - The Leadership

I will provide the audience with a brief account of Priests' history and their family duties in the temple as appointed by God. The *Oxford Bible Commentary* provides a dialogue on priests in the Hebrew Bible. It states that priests were most associated with legal aspects and written in genealogies. Priests were in constant prayer and in worship and often found biblical writing documents.²⁹ The purpose for writing this section is to allow the reader to see how important it was for priests and their family members to remain committed to worship, the teaching of God's word, and maintaining a character that glorified the name of God.

Since the beginning of the priesthood, when YHWH chose Aaron in Exodus 28;1-5, *The Oxford Bible Commentary* points out that other priests such as the Levites were called upon by YHWH to be servants in the temple as well. It was noted in this commentary that Levites had been priests in the pre-exilic times until their disobedience in worshipping idols. They were then given menial tasks in the temple. This example of

²⁸ Terry J. Betts. "Ezekiel the Priest," Google Books, 1, https://www.google.com/books/edition/Ezekiel_the_Priest/mTxmJpdAuwoC?hl=en&gbpv=1&bsq=te%20analysis.

²⁹ John Barton and John Muddiman, *The Oxford Bible Commentary* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, Incorporated, 2013), 14-19, ProQuest Ebook Central.

the beginning of the priesthood gives readers the knowledge that God's plans and purposes for his people were not to be misused or abused. God chose priests to serve him. God consecrated them for their work. Leviticus chapter twenty-one states priests are to maintain being ritually clean.³⁰

The example of abuse and misuse of powers as shown in the first chapter of the book of Samuel with Eli, the High Priest, and his children. The family was religious, its teachings religious, but the offspring's behaviors resulted in a much different way when the sons strayed away from the presence of God. Nissan Mindell's article, "Eli the High Priest," gives a brief lineage for Eli. Eli was a descendant of Ithamar, the fourth and youngest son of Aaron the High Priest. He became High Priest after the death of Pinehas, the son of Elazar, Ithamar's older brother. Eli was also the only one in those early days in the history of our people who wore two crowns, for he was both Judge (Shofet) and High Priest. Samuel became judge at the age of fifty-eight years, after the death of Samson (Shimshon) in the year 2830 (or 2831), holding this office for forty years, until his tragic death at the age of 98 years.³¹

The Jewish Virtual Library provides its readers with a brief history of Eli. This document points out a lack of historical information on Eli, but stated that his sons had Egyptian names, and one was named after Aaron's grandson. Included in this article is that God had chosen this family to be priests while they were in Egypt.³²

³⁰ Barton and Muddiman, *The Oxford Bible Commentary*, 14-19.

³¹ A Project of AICE, "Eli," The Jewish Library, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/eli>.

³² A Project of AICE, "Eli," The Jewish Library, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/eli>.

Eli was well known by the people and loved by them. The Jewish Library commented on Eli being known for his spiritual guidance. However, his sons, who were also priests, "did not follow in his footsteps."³³ Throughout the Old Testament, there are stories or various accounts of disobedience, abuse, and division among God's people. Whether priests or spiritual leaders in the community, God intervened to ensure his word remained powerful. For example, in the Book of First Samuel, the second chapter, Samuel points out the characters of Eli's sons who took their position in life as a means of disrespecting the people of God, the temple of God, the instruments within the temple, and God's word. This text gives an example of how people use power to promote themselves and use God's things to maintain that power.

David Jensen referred to the Bible's description of Eli's sons, Hophni and Phineas, as scoundrels who took advantage of their privileged position and degraded the temple.³⁴ Similar texts are found throughout the Old Testament as the reader see God's people questioning if those in charge are God's people who love the Lord with all their hearts. The continued revelation in Jensen's book also states that Eli's sons would fail him in position. They did what seemed right in their sight. Because of these atrocities and misuse of God's gift, Hophni and Phineas were killed in battle. The priest had been transporting the Ark of the Covenant back to camp when they were killed. The Philistines won the battle and kept the ark in their possession for seven months. Eli fell over and died when he was told about his sons and the ark. During the time of Eli and his sons'

³³ A Project of AICE, "Eli," The Jewish Library, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/eli>.

³⁴ David H. Jensen, *First and Second Samuel: A Theological Commentary on the Bible* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2015), 266, ProQuest Ebook Central.

reign as priests, God was raising a man called Samuel to become the next Judge and High Priest. Samuel rose as judge from that point on. Samuel proved to be true to God's word and God's purpose for his life.

God is a personal God who establishes and maintains a relationship with his people. Whether it was the Old Testament or New Testament, God's presence and holiness should always be maintained. Without intimacy, God's word becomes null and void in ones' life. Jensen uses the word detached, which usually happens because of man's lack of knowledge of God's person. Abuse happens when one honors others above God, and one loses perspective on his life and loses out on the purposes for which God has called one into service.³⁵

Even though we are dealing with the Old Testament at this time, the twelfth chapter of the book of Romans reflects on a statement that says, "do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, following the faith God has distributed to each of you" (Rom. 12:3). Eli and his sons exalted themselves above others. What were the sins against the house of Eli? Eli failed to teach his sons or even admonish his sons regarding their unruly behaviors in the eyes of God. Their behaviors caused an uproar in the temple, which led other priests astray. They continued to overlook the value of their positions and the value of God's presence.

The Old Testament reminds believers and readers of God's intention and insistence upon obedience. Eli had a total of four sons. God killed Nadab and Abihu for offering up strange fire on God's altar, and they had no surviving heirs. God was quick to cut off those who were walking out of order. On the other hand, Hophni and Phineas

³⁵ Jensen, *First and Second Samuel*, 266.

were killed in battle by the Philistines when they were taking the Ark of the Covenant to the camp.

First Samuel verses twelve through seventeen of the King James Version reads as follows:

1 Samuel: 2:12-17 (NRSV) read as follows:

Now the sons of Eli were scoundrels; they had no regard for the LORD or for the duties of the priests to the people. When anyone offered sacrifice, the priest's servant would come, while the meat was boiling, with a three-pronged fork in his hand, and he would thrust it into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot; all that the fork brought up the priest would take for himself. This is what they did at Shiloh to all the Israelites who came there. Moreover, before the fat was burned, the priest's servant would come and say to the one who was sacrificing, "Give meat for the priest to roast; for he will not accept boiled meat from you, but only raw." And if the man said to him, "Let them burn the fat first, and then take whatever you wish," he would say, "No, you must give it now; if not, I will take it by force." Thus the sin of the young men was very great in the sight of the LORD; for they treated the offerings of the LORD with contempt.

The first issue, in this case, was sons not knowing God in their hearts. Biblical accounts list these two sons as the officiating priests at the sanctuary in Shiloh; at the time, Hannah was there praying for a child. They were priests who were pretending to be something they were not but had a position because of their father's placement as Chief of Priests in the temples. Eli was a High Priest, and his sons were to follow what God had ordained to be used as a sacrifice for sin. These sons partook of the holy elements as a meal for themselves, not considering the purpose for what God had ordained. Moreover, these young priests threatened to do violence to the people if they refused to give them the meat. There was sexual misconduct within the temple with women who were servants in the temple. Thirdly, their actions led other priests to go astray with their disobedience. Finally, this hardship they placed upon the temple caused death and destruction within the temple gates. It is noted that Phinneas' wife died while giving birth to a son, Ichabod.

First Samuel outlines God's order in how he had chosen his priests. God sent a man to speak to Eli and reminded him how he was chosen to be the temple's High Priest. God had appeared to Eli's father's house in the days of the Pharaoh in Egypt. God picked him out of all the tribes of Israel to be his priest. God gives orderly directions in that they were to offer upon his altar, burn incense, wear ephods in the presence of God; and they were to receive the offerings made by the people. Things were to be done orderly and followed through as ordained by God. God promised the house of Eli a forever place and position in Israel. The only requisite was to honor him. God cut off the house of Eli soon after. The accounts written out in Samuel's book are just a few examples of how God handles disobedience and abuse.

Another point to add to the destruction of the house of Eli can be found in John Barton's commentary discussion regarding the battle where Hopni and Phineas were met with demise. The Philistines seized the ark. Barton states the ark was used to secure victory and was greeted with a battle-cry. The battle was lost and could have been accounted for by the degenerate priesthood of Shiloh. The ark falling into the hands of the enemy could have been considered as the final act God performed to show his people that he was in full of control.³⁶

Conclusion

In conclusion, I addressed some issues regarding leaders who have chosen to misappropriate their positions and their purpose for being in leadership. Love has everything to do with relationships between the leadership and those who follow. Old

³⁶ Barton and Muddiman, *The Oxford Bible Commentary*, 37.

Testament reflects on loving God with one's heart, soul, and mind. New Testament reminds the believer how God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son. Each text provides a platform or foundation for why believers do what they do. However, this project will provide the twenty first century believer a reminder of the texts mentioned above to maintain their faith walk.

Also, this project will allow the participants to work alongside its leadership, working towards equality within the church's realm. This project will concentrate on leading with a servant leadership attitude. This project is designed to address the missing element of loving one another no matter what status or position one may hold. With the reminder of the more excellent way, Paul mentions in 1 Corinthians 12:31, I include those elements that come with leadership responsibilities in the project. Those elements include equal opportunities, respect for one another, and servant leadership accountability. This project's primary purpose is to raise awareness of what is needed to make a successful ministry work from the position of leadership down to those who hold no official positions.

CHAPTER THREE

HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS

In this chapter a discussion will be centered on the disconnection and attempts to reconnect within the church, political realm, educational pursuits, entertainment, and economic life. Blacks deemed it necessary to transition to their place of worship, educational system, and establishment of livelihood. Also noted are the various descriptions of the freed slaves being referred to interchangeably with descriptions such as people of color, Blacks, Negroes, and African Americans throughout this chapter.

Historically, people of color were not allowed to serve in the community of churches during the 1700s. In the timeline article "Methodism in Black and White," the writer outlined when various events happened. John Wesley baptized two slaves in 1758. The slaves, in turn, started their society in what was called the "new world." There was listed in this article, a black woman who helped organize a Methodist church in 1760. In 1784, a black man received a license to preach. By 1790, Blacks made up twenty percent of the Methodist church. In 1791, John Wesley died, and the increasing segregation pushed the Blacks out of Methodism to form their society. At that time, Richard Allen started the African Methodist Episcopal Church in Philadelphia. Another society was organized in 1821 by James Varick, which was called the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church in New York. In 1871, the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church was founded in Jackson, Tennessee. Even as far back as 1939, The Methodist Episcopal

Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church South, and the Methodist Protestant Church united to form The Methodist Church. Blacks were segregated into a separate Central Jurisdiction.¹

This brief timeline gave readers an idea of what injustice and devaluation looked like during the late 1700s and early 1800s. This writing gives a brief account of how certain areas of the country treated Blacks as they attempted to experience religious freedom. Some were given opportunities to participate as far as preaching. However, there were others who were not welcomed into society.

Frequent acts of discrimination and segregation within the white Methodist churches in the late 1700s led blacks to find their own places of worship. In the “Journal of Negro History,” Joseph Hartzell wrote, “In 1800 the ordination of Negroes was authorized. The colored membership was large, and it was desired, especially in the cities and larger towns where separate services and churches were provided.”² Although Negroes were allowed to participate in the Methodist administration, they were separated geographically and congregationally as a church. Separation was the one issue or concern that provided separatism in the worship experience. Soon division and strife related to seating and legislation on church properties and pastoral services separated the church in favor of Negro Methodist congregations. Soon afterward, the African Methodist Episcopal was formed as well, as the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Churches were formed and organized as individual congregations. Hartzell stated, “these separate Negro

¹ United Methodist Communications, “Timeline: Methodism in Black and White adapted from New World Outlook,” United Methodist Church, <https://www.umc.org/en/content/timeline-methodism-in-black-and-white>.

² Joseph C. Hartzell, “Methodism and the Negro in the United States,” *Journal of Negro History* 8, no. 3 (July 1923): 301-315, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2713561>.

denominations would provide less opportunity for friction on account of race prejudice, whether among whites or blacks, and freer and better opportunities for the development of self-help and racial capabilities.”³ With the split of the Methodist church, the southern Methodist church leaders were determined to evangelize those still in slavery, especially for those individuals and groups of Negroes who lived on the plantation. There was a determination to keep this population from dying without knowing God and his salvation. Missions and missionaries grew, but the threat of the union separating through a Civil War because of the slavery question caused disarray among the whites in the South. Hartzell stated that Negro slavery was the biggest concern, discussion, and division among the people in the south, which resulted in the union being torn apart by the Civil War. After the war, the church made a stance regarding the separation of the Methodist church. Blacks and Whites continued to have differences of opinion on slavery. Slavery was considered contrary to the laws of God and man and wrong and hurtful to society. All buying and selling of slaves was forbidden.⁴ Reviewing the church's history as a vital element in the discussion of injustice in society and seeing the practice of inequality continue to rear its ugly head in the twenty-first century is almost surreal.

The movement of the church and Black people had and still has its ups and downs. As the walk-through historical movements continue, there are issues and concerns today that still exist among the people of color within the church communities. William Montgomery wrote in the preface of his book the church has served as more than a

³ Hartzell, “Methodism and the Negro in the United States,” 301-315.

⁴ Hartzell, “Methodism and the Negro in the United States,” 301-315.

religious institute.⁵ It has had its dealings in social, political, and economic functions as well. Benjamin E. Mays, Joseph M. Nicholson, E. Franklin Frazier, and others were attracted to the Black Church as a field of study and not necessarily the welfare of the people. Montgomery continued his conversation, saying historians were particularly interested in the political atmosphere of the black church rather than the time of freedom from slavery up to and including the twentieth century.⁶ They also showed a lack of concern about how emancipation affected Blacks and how this time left a history of struggle and racism in its path. Knowing that politics was considered more important than the lives of the people struggling for civil rights seemed to be a disgrace for a nation considered the most livable nation. Despite the obstacles to become relevant, freedom from slavery was not taken seriously.

The Baptist Church also experienced struggles in its attempts to address the issue of racism within the church. According to James Melvin Washington, the collaboration efforts between Blacks and Whites of the national organizations did not exist until 1970, ninety-nine years after the failure of the merger between Black and White abolitionist Baptists. Even though blacks did want to seek the assistance of white, there appeared to be a growing number of Baptist groups lobbying for black civil rights.⁷ As the history of African Americans continues, the readers will learn how education was the key to Blacks being able to hold office in government positions, vote, and grow economically.

⁵ Samuel S. Hill, and William E. Montgomery, *Under Their Own Vine and Fig Tree: The African American Church in the South, 1865–1900* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1993), xiii, 358.

⁶ Hill and Montgomery, *Under Their Own Vine and Fig Tree*, xiii, 358.

⁷ Encyclopedia Virginia Authors, “Black Baptists in Virginia (1865-1902),” Encyclopedia Virginia, <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/black-baptists-in-virginia-1865-1902/>.

Blacks in politics held positions but were not permitted the opportunity in every sector to lead whites. After Nat Turner's rebellion, Whites were fearful of the power among the Blacks and instituted laws that prohibited Blacks worshipping in churches without white supervision. Prohibiting blacks were evidence that proved to be oppressive and left people feeling less valued and unworthy.

Author, James Washington commented in his book how racial bitterness was aggravated by the Reconstruction. The Reconstruction period was to readdress the inequities of slavery and its political, social, and economic legacy and to solve the problems arising from the readmission to the Union of the eleven states that had seceded at or before the outbreak of war. This statement on readdressing the inequities and indicating that this movement aggravated racial bitterness would leave one wondering why try at all with such difficulties in making right out of wrong. It appeared throughout Washington's book that the more the Blacks attempted to do better, there was always a movement or process that would hold them back. According to Washington, the dispute among the north and south churches regarding Blacks in the same denomination continued throughout the Reconstruction period.⁸

In part four of the discussion of Interracial Democracy, scholars pinned these two sentences as the subtitle of the article. "People make choices. Choices make history."⁹ The terms people and choices intertwined together could lead to a victorious outcome or something detrimental or devastating. In this instance, scholars share how Black people

⁸ James Melvin Washington, *Frustrated Fellowship: The Black Baptist Quest for Social Power* (Macon, GA: Mercer. 1986), 13.

⁹ The Reconstruction Era and the Fragility of Democracy, "Part Four: Interracial Democracy," Facing History and Ourselves, <https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/reconstruction-era-and-fragility-democracy>.

and whites worked together during the Reconstruction period to bring about some needed changes in society that would benefit both parties. Throughout this article, viewers will be exposed to radical politics and politicians, black and whites working together for a common goal, blacks included in politics as politicians, blacks voting.

The first victorious statement announced by one of the commentators David Blight, was the involvement of blacks in 1896 being able to vote and blacks being involved and elected as politicians. Blight excitedly announces, “There’s your most obvious revolution out of Reconstruction the black politician. It was all in the mindset of those who had once been bound by hate and abuse to rethink their future and what was relevant. Blacks wanted to own and belong. They wanted not only freedom, but they wanted what they worked and toiled for. They wanted to be “economically successful and they wanted for everybody” as eloquently stated by George Lipsitz.”¹⁰

Alliances were made with poor whites. Eric Foner remarks indicated this was the beginning of what history has termed Radical Reconstruction after congress had passed the Reconstruction Act of 1867 lasting for about ten years. At this time, new governments were created based on men voting without any racial qualification. The end of this radical time in history ended with the Civil Rights Act of 1875.

This article also addresses how congress was trying to build its stance on equality for former slaves, now black American citizens. The name changes from former slaves, to being identified as black American citizens appears to be a mouthful and somewhat unbelievable as the terms to identify people of color consistently changes depending on

¹⁰ The Reconstruction Era and the Fragility of Democracy, “Part Four: Interracial Democracy,” Facing History and Ourselves, <https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/reconstruction-era-and-fragility-democracy>.

what history writers are unraveling at the time. Blacks involved in politics and in the institution of a new government not only insisted upon a name change for people of color but demanded a name to be respected and nurtured. The name of particular notation was being declared an American citizen.

How did the Reconstruction Period look on a local level? It was a rainbow. This rainbow included blacks and poor whites coming together to rebuild their South. To rebuild, there was proof that whites could collaborate along with blacks. The people wanted to rebuild shattered schools, railroads, hospitals, orphanages, and many other economic establishments.

The Radical Reconstruction's purpose was not just to rebuild the physical institutions, but to create a new state in the South. This article on Radical Reconstruction outlines the 1868 South Carolina Convention of 1868 as an experiment. After reviewing the details of this article, no one should count out the poor and what one would consider as being disadvantaged. The delegates included the majority of black delegates, sympathetic whites for the cause, and other people who were elected to the delegation came together to accomplish what no other calvary of people could do. Out of that convention a public education system was created, the first civil rights laws were passed at the state level, blacks serving on juries, and white supremacy was challenged.¹¹ Although these significant history making events lasted ten years they were considered a great beginning towards success and a life of production and relevancy.

¹¹The Reconstruction Era and the Fragility of Democracy, "Part Four: Interracial Democracy," Facing History and Ourselves, <https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/reconstruction-era-and-fragility-democracy>.

In each religious denominations mentioned above, the struggle to maintain and move forward in this new freedom for African Americans continues to be at the forefront. This struggle is true for those who found themselves entangled in educational, political, and economic pursuits. After the freedom of slaves, Blacks formed their own towns—for example, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, Sugarland, Maryland, Nicodemus, Kansas. Even though Norman L. Crockett wrote a book about black towns, there are few records to be found. Many descendants have written about some of their ancestors who grew up in other places like, Blackdom, New Mexico. Blacks were driven out due to the drought, Hobson City, Alabama; Allensworth, California; and Rentiesville, Oklahoma. Oklahoman black towns included Clearview, Boley, and Langston, founded in 1890. Mount Bayou, Mississippi, was founded in 1887 by freedmen led by Isaiah Montgomery. Crockett reported that Booker T. Washington cited it as a model of self-sufficiency, having little contact with Whites and Eatonville, Florida, which was incorporated in 1887.¹²

Zora Neale Hurston collected black folklore and wrote about it in "Of Mules and Men." Greenwood, near North Tulsa, was created by a wealthy black man in 1906. It gained its fame as Black Wall Street but was later destroyed by angry whites in 1921. There is no complete list of black towns, and records were not extensively kept. Whites were not interested in maintaining records of black people's successes at that time. Crockett reported that the depression played a heavy role in these towns dying out. Blacks had to go out and find jobs for their families. A few communities left in the

¹² Norman L. Crockett, *The Black Towns* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2021), xi-xv, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1p2gkjr>.

Washington, DC area, such as North Brentwood, were established by a white Civil War veteran. Parts of Glenarden, Lincoln, Chapel Hill, Rossville, and Ridgely still exist in the Washington DC area to represent a church or school. Some areas were incorporated, some areas were only communities of people. So many successes and just as many failures are an example of more evidence of the struggle for blacks to be free of the oppressing leadership of the whites.¹³

During the Reconstruction, Blacks took on activism for their rights. The Collins Dictionary online definition of activism is “the doctrine or practice of vigorous action or involvement as a means of achieving political or other goals.”¹⁴ Blacks sought to change the atmosphere within the political realm. They fought against southerner's so-called codes to block the Blacks from serving in the political field. It was noted that President Andrew Johnson's policies excluded Blacks. However, this period also pushed forth with Congress granting Blacks the status of citizenship, the right to vote, as guaranteed by the fourteenth and fifteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution. As written by a well-known author, Charles Dickens, this time in history was the best and worst.¹⁵ This history detailing the pushing forth of black leadership during the Reconstruction includes black leaders emerging. As these leaders emerged, so did the hostilities of those who opposed the Reconstruction. The article on Reconstruction notes that Southern Whites were against the new policies bringing energy to the process. White supremacy grew. The

¹³ Crockett, *The Black Towns*, 155-188.

¹⁴ Collins Dictionary authors, “Activism,” Collins Dictionary, <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/us/dictionary/English/activism>.

¹⁵ Charles Dickens, *A Tale of Two Cities* (New York, NY: Open Road Integrated Media, Inc., 1986), 8, ProQuest Ebook Central.

Ku Klux Klan harassed, targeted, and murdered blacks who challenged their White superiors.¹⁶

After the Civil War, the end of slavery did not deter those filled with hate. Abuse to African Americans continued, formally known as Negroes. In the book *They Left Great Marks on Me* by Kidada E. Williams, gives testimonies of racial violence from the Emancipation to World War I. These actions continued to spread identifying the irrational behaviors of those who could not let go of the strongholds in their own lives. For example, hatred and persecution, oppression, injustice and violence, lynching, and being burned alive were just a few of the atrocities endured at this time in history.¹⁷

In Williams' introduction, he comments on James Hicks who was one of several million emancipated Americans living throughout the former slaveholding states. He worked towards establishing authority and autonomy over their lives, which they believed was essential to their fate as a liberated people. For Hicks this meant reuniting family members separated by slave sales and the Civil War; establishing an independent household and acting as its head; negotiating a contract with a planter named Bill Darden that included land to farm, shelter, seeds, and farm equipment; voting in elections; harvesting his share of the crop; providing for his family's "well-being, and working with other blacks to establish institutions that were independent of white people's influence."¹⁸

As mentioned previously, the purpose for this chapter is to provide an awareness of the widespread issue as it related to lack of compassion, inequality, and imbalance in a

¹⁶ American Black History Authors, "Reconstruction," American Black History, <https://www.history.com/topics/american-civil-war/black-leaders-during-reconstruction>.

¹⁷ Kidada E. Williams, *They Left Great Marks on Me: African American Testimonies of Racial Violence from Emancipation to World War I* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2012), 55-99.

¹⁸ Williams, *They Left Great Marks on Me*, 55-99.

movement that had its origins in slavery. Due to lack of respect and oppression during the 1700s and 1800s, the spread of the lack of diversity continued to cause division among the people, which included the church community.

This injustice allowed the wealthy to profit from abusive behaviors towards men, women, and children of color. There were slave owners who used religion as a stronghold to keep them bound and under subjection. I had intended to address individual subjects in this paper. However, the basic theme of the movement for Blacks leaving prominently White churches was due to lack of respect and oppression.

Some individuals were treated better than others. However, the struggle to obtain positions of leadership in the church was always met with some opposition. Some were born free while other slaves experienced the same injustices because of the color of their skin. A catechism of inequalities such as oppression leaves one feeling devalued and disconnected in communication, especially when a person has unhealthy leadership tendencies. Inequality did not begin in the church but soon rose in the church, which overflowed from others being given authority to lead without leadership skills, including care for the overall individual or groups of people. Today's inequality of power and privilege continues to be exhibited through anger, hatred, unjust crimes, physical abuse, and financial abuse.

In the African American Odyssey section on Reconstruction, the writer stated that many hostile Whites confronted Blacks. The nation was unprepared to deal with the question of the black population obtaining full citizenship. This exhibition is described as *A Quest for Full Citizenship* which explores black America's quest for equality from the early national period through the twentieth century. This library's materials were gathered

over the two hundred years of its existence, telling the African American experience through nine chronological periods. These documented the courage and determination Blacks faced with adverse circumstances. They overcame immense odds to participate in all aspects of American society fully. The exhibit includes the work of abolitionists in the first half of the nineteenth century, depictions of the long journey following the Civil War towards equality in employment, education, and politics, strategies used to secure the vote, recognition of outstanding Black leaders, and the contributions of sports figures, Black soldiers, artists, actors, writers, and others in the fight against segregation and discrimination.¹⁹

From Reconstruction throughout the twentieth century, women played a significant role in establishing and invigorating the Black Baptist community. Baptist women have consistently formed the largest group of Black Christians in America, and within the Baptist Church itself. Women continue to comprise more than sixty percent of Black membership. Although long faced with gender discrimination that barred them from leadership positions, women formed the heart of the church by visiting the homes of sick parishioners, participating in Bible readings, donating clothes and food to the needy, counseling prisoners, establishing nurseries and orphanages, supporting education and vocational training programs, crusading temperance, and supporting several other causes. Over the twentieth century, the growing number of Baptist women missionaries increased the influence of Black women both within the United States and abroad.²⁰

¹⁹ Library of Congress Authors, "The African American Odyssey: Quest for Full Citizenship," Library of Congress, <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/aahtml/exhibit/aointro.html>.

²⁰ Oxford African American Studies Center, "Photo Essay – Black Churches in America," Oxford University Press, <https://oxfordaasc.com/page/photo-essay-black-churches-in-america>.

The Heinz History Center of Pittsburgh addressed Pittsburgh's reputation as an anti-slavery community. One thing noted in this article was the realization that although slaves were free legally, the mentality of the social order of the day continued to suggest they were being mistreated. Racism existed and was not so easily erasable. However, Pittsburgh took on a different approach in collaborating their efforts to ensure the civil rights of African Americans.²¹ The northern state of Pennsylvania is noted to have historically participated in the Underground Railroad begun by Sojourner Truth. Many landmarks exist throughout the state, displaying signs and areas where the freedom marches took place.

In some Southern areas where freedom from slavery was to be practiced, Jim Crow laws were established to undermine the rights and privileges of African Americans. The *Encyclopedia Britannica* described Jim Crow law in U.S. history, to be any of the laws that enforced racial segregation in the South between the end of Reconstruction in 1877 and the beginning of the Civil Right Movement in the 1950s. The term came to be a derogatory epithet for African Americans and a designation for their segregated life.²² Jim Crow started as a black-faced minstrel song and dance act with a white man. Adding insult to injury, his depiction was to show African Americans as dumb, stupid, slow, and uneducated in his performance. A display of inferiority became even more prevalent with the rise of white supremacy after the Reconstruction. As sad as Jim Crow laws were for

²¹ Heinz History Center, "From Slavery to Freedom," Heinz History Center, <https://www.heinzhistorycenter.org/fromslaverytofreedom/>.

²² Melvin I. Urofsky, "Jim Crow Law," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Jim-Crow-law>.

African Americans, this became a boost with white cultures' curiosity about black culture.

The Jim Crow laws affected African Americans in politics as well. It undermined the progress African Americans were making when holding offices. One particular interest was the former position President Jefferson Davis held where an African American, Hiram Revels of Mississippi, took the president's seat in the Senate. The rise in politics for African Americans grew in the late 1800s and soon outnumbered Whites. However, white supremacy gained prominence and influenced the lack of government acceptance of African Americans having an equal standing within the realms of American politics. It took seventy-two years from 1899 for African Americans in the South to elect a candidate of their choice to the U.S. Congress. This situation exhibited seventy-two years of African Americans being devalued and overlooked in a country that freed African Americans from slavery was a slap in the face to prove how white supremacy was considered more valuable than others. It was a constant struggle for African Americans to reach some semblance of absolute freedom in 1965 under the passage of the Voting Rights Act. Almost 100 years following the freedom of slavery was a long time to wait for justice.²³

Historically, politics in the late 1800s was in disarray. People began to start their political parties, and presidents had hardly any powers. Some Americans began developing solutions to various problems. There were economic inequalities and widespread corruption. President Hayes barely won the election in 1876. His attempts to

²³ Black Politics Authors, "African American Politics: A History of Struggle," Black Politics, <https://blackpolitics.org/african-american-politics-history-struggle/>.

fight for African American's rights were hindered by the Democratic Congress, and he did not do much as a president. The article stated he was ill-prepared for the work as a president. Once again, African Americans were considered less valuable as the corruption continued in politics.²⁴

Participation in professional sports for African Americans was met with opposition as well. “The Bleacher Report” reported how segregation continued even in the National Football League (NFL) when Charles Follis and Charles Baker were allowed to play in the pros but not necessarily admitted into the league in the early 1900s. This report states there was limited integration, and in 1933 they were banned from playing in the leagues. Although professional African Americans football players excelled in their various positions, there appeared always to be a question of why not management positions and other executive positions. When the head coach and management positions came along, it appeared to be one African American. In 1989, there was a first-time Black head coach and in 2002 first black general manager.²⁵

The first African American to play in a professional basketball white league in 1902 was Harry “Buck” Lew. With Earl Lloyd being the first African American National Basketball Association (NBA) player and Chuck Cooper signing on in 1950 appeared to spread the competition to another level. The African American registry stated that segregation forced Black basketball players to develop a unique game that is distinctly urban, relentlessly innovative, and always stylistic. The history of American basketball

²⁴ The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, “Politics in the Gilded Age, 1870—1900 | U.S. History II: 1877 to Present,” Encyclopedia Britannica, <https://www.britannica/event/Gilded-Age>.

²⁵ Zeke Fuhrman, “A History of African-American Athletes,” Bleacher Report, <https://bleacherreport.com/articles/73113-a-history-of-african-american-athletes>.

tells a compelling story about athletic competition in a nation struggling to live up to its ideals of freedom and democracy through business. African American players started their leagues and soon became the go-to teams in America. For example, the well-known Harlem Globe Trotters traveled and performed worldwide and are still making history today. “The Bleacher Report” also stated the NBA had the most prominent African American listing of engagements by standing up for the rights of others. After the George Floyd murder, the sports world took on another fight as it supports civil rights for all those abused and misused by government systems.²⁶

When the Olympics came to the United States in 1906, an African American named George Coleman Poage was the first African American to win an Olympic medal. Many others have followed his lead, such as Jesse Owens, Alice Coachman, Harrison Dillard, to name a few.²⁷ The good news about George Coleman Poage is where he grew up. In La Crosse, Wisconsin, he was well-educated and spent most of his time excelling in athletics. He was able to attend college and earned a degree in history in 1903. His career as a track star was phenomenal. He was the first to win an Olympic medal; however, he met with the opposition having to experience separate facilities at the World's Fair. There was a boycott suggesting that African American athletes not participate. Poage decided to compete and won the medals placing third place. Following his sports career, he found employment as a postal clerk and retired after thirty years of

²⁶ Susan Altman, “Black History and American Professional Basketball,” African American Registry, <https://aaregistry.org/story/the-nba-african-americans-love-this-game/>.

²⁷ Smithsonian Authors, “Sports: Leveling the Playing Field,” NMAAHC, <https://nmaahc.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/sports>.

service.²⁸ Jesse Owens and others found themselves in the same situation of being separated from their White constituents. These fine athletes rose to the top, brought home the medals, yet were mistreated by many including the president and the neighbors next door. In the words of Jesse Owens, "When I came back to my native country, after all the stories about Hitler, I could not ride in the front of the bus," he said. "I had to go to the back door. I could not live where I wanted. I was not invited to shake hands with Hitler, but I was not invited to the White House to shake hands with the president, either."²⁹

Jackie Robinson was the first Black player in the major leagues in sixty-three years in other sports history. As history continued to repeat itself, he too had to endure having his team members who openly protested not wanting to play with him, having bottles hurled at him not being able to stay in the same hotels as his teammates or eat in the same restaurant. Even though he was the National League Rookie of the Year and the league's MVP, Robinson had to persevere through. In the words of Jackie Robinson, "Plenty of times I wanted to haul off when somebody insulted me for the color of my skin, but I had to hold to myself. I knew I was kind of an experiment. The whole thing was bigger than me."³⁰

Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier in MLB sports. Following him came players like Larry Doby, Hank Thompson, and Willard "Home Run" Brown. Dan Daniel wrote in his column that St. Louis would go for Negroes on their team. However,

²⁸ Alexander Klein, "George Coleman Poage 1880-1962," Black Past, <https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/poage-george-coleman-1800-1962>.

²⁹ Jesse Owens, "Movie, Olympics and Quotes," Biography, <https://www.biography.com/athletes/jesse-owens>.

³⁰ The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, "Riding Freedom: Ten Milestones in U.S. Civil Rights History," Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Freedom-Rides>.

Thompson and Brown proved him wrong. With small victories, they and others were offered the opportunity to hit, score, catch, and continue under the control of 'white baseball.' Larry Moffi and Jonathan Kronstadt wrote, "Like many of baseball's first Black players, he (Dan Bankhead) was thrown into white baseball with the physical tools to succeed but little or no emotional support."³¹ It was great that these men could break color barriers and give African Americans a name down through history. Their fight and struggle for inclusion opened the door for others to become successful in any sport.

African Americans serving in the armed forces were addressed with mixed concerns. One could be free to serve alongside White counterparts, and at the same time, continue to experience the backlash of segregation. President Roosevelt ended discrimination in the defense industry with the armed services remaining segregated. Ending segregation on paper and through executive orders did not stop those in the south from fighting against the proposed order. The attempt to abolish segregation in the mid-1940s came with a struggle and with a powerful backup.³² Blacks had always served in the American armed forces from the time of the American Revolution, and at that time, Blacks and Whites fought alongside one another. They fought alongside each other but did not have the same rights and privileges. President Truman and President Roosevelt attempted but were not very successful in leveling the playing ground on the battlefield. The act of prohibiting racial segregation and those who served in the military revealed two different stories. From the inside, African Americans had to deal with being

³¹ Larry Moffi and Jonathan Kronstadt, *Crossing the Line Black Major Leaguers, 1947-1959* (Iowa City, IA: University of Iowa Press, 1994), 13, Google Books, www.google.com/books/edition/Crossing_the_Line.

³² The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, "Riding Freedom: Ten Milestones in U.S. Civil Rights History," Encyclopedia Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/list/riding-freedom-10-milestones-in-us-civil-rights-history>.

mistreated and undervalued. From the outside, the two presidents mentioned above did their best to squash the injustice through executive orders and hand-written laws.

The African American history timetable outlines the up and downs of life. From 1900-1930, there were successful transitions and many fights which were delayed. The writing of the Negro anthem, “Lift Every Voice and Sing,” was written by James Weldon Johnson and continues to echo the halls of many African American events today. This song depicts the times of struggle, fighting, and freedom and encourages those who continue to fight until victory could be obtained.³³ At the same time, boycotts in the Southern States were held from 1900-1906, raising awareness of unfair segregation. Other news included black military troops dishonorably charged after being wrongly accused of murder and raids in Texas. Riots were reported all over the country. At the same time, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, also known as the NAACP, was formed, and the National Urban League. From reviewing this timeline, African Americans had drawbacks and then moved forward, and within years, there were times when it brought backlash to those who wanted a life of freedom and equality.

Freedom from slavery had already been established on paper and in the law-making sector. However, the pain of struggling to be free remained in the hearts and minds of African Americans. In the entertainment world, especially in the theatre, writers stated, “Some believe the minstrel shows of the early 19th century to be the roots of Black theatre, but they initially were written by whites, acted by whites in blackface, and

³³ James Weldon Johnson and J. Rosamond Johnson, “Lift Every Voice and Sing,” Music Video, 3:09, <https://youtu.be/ktrS2DmMcsc>.

performed for white audiences.”³⁴ The Britannica also addressed some successes African Americans had in the early nineteenth century writing their plays and being published in the twentieth century, including James Brown, William Wells Brown, and dramatist Angelina W. Grimké. The Harlem Renaissance brought on success for black playwrights, actors, and actresses.³⁵

Black Theatre fought hard to find its path in entertainment to dispel the minstrelsy of yesterday. Anthony Hill and Douglas Barnett stated, "African American Theatre is a vibrant and unique entity enriched by ancient Egyptian rituals, West African folklore, and European theatrical practices. A continuum of African folk traditions, this theatre combines storytelling, mythology, rituals, music, song, and dance with ancestor worship from ancient times to the present. It has afforded black artists a cultural gold mine to celebrate what it has been like to be an African American in The New World."³⁶ I believe that the vibrant colors in costumes and décor represented in African American culture played an important role. The writers explained the importance of bringing together the unique history of African Americans in theatre. These young men combined the directories and dictionaries describing the black theatre organizations, companies, theatres, and performing groups; the second discussed early black American playwrights and dramatic writers; and the third profiled performers and theatre

³⁴ Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, "Black Theatre Encyclopedia," Encyclopedia Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/art/black-theatre>.

³⁵ Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, "Black Theatre Encyclopedia."

³⁶ Anthony Duane Hill, "The Black Presence in Theater through the Centuries in the Historical Dictionary of African American Theater," Black Past, <https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/black-thespians-through-centuries-historical-dictionary-african-american-theatre/>.

people.³⁷ The days of white faces painted black no longer displayed the perception that African Americans were lazy, buffoons, and up to no good individuals. Gone were the times of being laughed at and undervalued in the world of freedom and expression. Hill and Barnett described the movement as more progressive, radical, and sometimes militant. An essential factor indicated in this article was the attempt to do away with racial stereotypes and become more inclusive in the mainstream in the world of drama.³⁸

Receiving an education became vital to the African American population. Many believed education would assist in raising their standard of living. One of the significant civil rights movements in 1954 was the Brown vs. Board of Education. With Thurgood Marshall at the helm of this historical and instrumental movement. The NAACP filed lawsuits on behalf of African American students. The Supreme Court ruled that segregation in public schools violated the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution. Leaders of the public schools in the South maintained their stance on remaining segregated.

The *Greensboro Four* students from North Carolina A and T in Greensboro, North Carolina, sat in a dining area, purchased their lunches at a "white only" store. The waitresses refused to serve them. The manager called the police, and the news was contacted. The police decided they could do nothing about customers who had cash to pay for their purchases. As a result, their pictures were posted in the local paper, and the protest went viral. Protests such as these, exhibiting displeasure over being served

³⁷ Anthony Duane Hill, "The Black Presence in Theater."

³⁸ Anthony Duane Hill, "The Black Presence in Theater."

as regular paying customers, became newsworthy throughout the country. Britannica stated that these acts of protests provided a template for nonviolent resistance.³⁹

African Americans had times of failures and times for celebrating while struggling for equal rights. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 became a time for celebration. It was received by many. When President John F. Kennedy proposed this law in 1963, it was not supported well enough to be passed in Congress. Britannica explained that this law was intended to end discrimination based on race, color, religion, or national origin and has often been called the most important U.S. law on civil rights since Reconstruction 1865.

While African Americans protested through nonviolent acts, Britannica reported White groups responded by ensuring their pro-segregation candidates won elections for public office and racial violence. Challenging laws and rulings from presidents down to local governments was the fight for white justice and not for the people. One movement that the Supreme Court upheld was the *Heart of Atlanta Motel vs. the U.S.* in 1964. The act gave federal law enforcement agencies the power to prevent racial discrimination in employment, voting, and the use of public facilities. As a follow-up to this act, The *Voting Rights Act* ensured African Americans could exercise their right to vote under the Fifteenth Amendment.⁴⁰

The timeline of education for the State of Virginia provided its readers a view of how African Americans were often pushed back to receive at least a taste of being free

³⁹ The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, "1960-The Greensboro Four and the Sit-In Movement: Timeline of the American Civil Rights Movement," Encyclopedia Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/list/timeline-of-the-american-civil-rights-movement>.

⁴⁰ The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, "Riding Freedom: Ten Milestones in U.S. Civil Rights History," Encyclopedia Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/event/>.

and wanting to be equal. In 1830, teachers were forbidden to educate African Americans. In 1870, this was a period where African Americans and Whites could not be taught together. In 1871, this year allowed for the teaching of African Americans. However, for every 200 students, there was only one teacher. In 1876, Isaiah Wallace, born to former slaves, founded the Scrabble School. This school had its ups and downs, successes, and failures. The Supreme Court endorses the doctrine of separate but equal in *Plessy vs. Ferguson*.⁴¹

At the turn of the century, there were over 600 African American students enrolled in school. Anna T. Jeannes donated over a million dollars to support Southern African American schools. In 1913, Booker T. Washington convinced Julius Rosenwald to fund the construction of six schools. From 1914-1920, the Rosenwald building and designing of schools took place in the south. Education remained vital in the lives of African Americans. In 1964, toilets were added to the schools.⁴²

Moreover, in 1967 white students were joined by African Americans in the Scrabble schools. After the Scrabble, schools fell in disrepair. In 1990, E. Franklin Warner worked on supporting and funding the Scrabble schools.⁴³

This historical account of one school in the South appears to be a success, although it took over one hundred years to rebuild. This school was an important means to economic independence and a significant step towards equality. Even with the Southern states being against full equality, African Americans utilize creative as ways to

⁴¹ Brian Duignan, "Plessy v. Ferguson," Encyclopedia Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Plessy-v-Ferguson-1896>.

⁴² The Scrabble School Authors, "A Rosenwald School in Rappahannock County, VA," The Scrabble School, <https://www.scrabbleschool.org/Precis.shtml>.

⁴³ Scrabble School Authors, "A Rosenwald School."

learn. This creativity was influential in creating schools and, later in history, participating in more government projects and policy-making events.

Conclusion

This historical detail about the struggles and the fight for freedom continues in the twenty-first century. African Americans believed they had to separate to provide for themselves an excellent platform to serve God and its people. Separating just to have a seat in the place where the Bible says God loved all the world continued to draw abuse and sometimes death for African Americans.

Many African American towns and cities grew at a profit, flourished, and yet failed within few years of their existence. Although some opposed the building of these cities and towns, African Americans proved they were creative and able to succeed outside of the strongholds that had held onto them for many years.

As mentioned previously throughout this chapter, the Reconstruction proved to be, as the writer Charles Dickens put it, the worst of times and the best of times. Schools were built, yet African Americans could not share in the same education. Some African Americans were able to participate in politics and government ventures, but those in the South suffered the longest and most challenging from the violence and abuse happening among African Americans. Some former slave traders and slave owners refused to let go of their own and their means of profit from selling and buying people and products.

In the twenty first century, when one walks or drives into a neighborhood confronted by the words "you do not belong here," those words echo from the past where slavery taught Africans Americans did not belong. Many instances mentioned above

continue to happen in sports, homeownership, obtaining suitable employment, good educational opportunities, and many other lifelong situations. One thing history has taught African Americans is that the fight must go on, the struggle must go on, and the push for excellence must continue.

With all the historical information gathered in this chapter, many trailblazers fought for justice and equality. While not many individual names were mentioned in this chapter, I intended to show readers how undervalued, unequal, and disrespectful actions towards the African American population drove this country to a civil war. The fight for freedom has been and will continue to be a fight for freedom in the future.

CHAPTER FOUR

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

Homewood African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (AMEZ) has experienced a decline in membership, attendance, and participation. This church is in a community that has experienced an economic downward spiral due to the relocation of residents seeking better opportunities along with the effects of drugs and violence. If the congregation of Homewood AME Zion church could increase awareness on how to become a more loving and unified congregation through small group leadership training, then the congregation would be able to foster and cultivate a better relationship with God, each other, and the community for a healthier congregation.

This chapter will focus on raising awareness of the need to develop and maintain a healthy congregation within Homewood African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. Without knowing one's history, it would be difficult to identify the needs of a congregation. This congregation has suffered the effects of losing two pastors in death between 1996 and 2019. Although one pastor had retired, there was a continued fellowship and closeness between him and the members. In 1999, a new pastor was assigned and served over twenty years in this context. In the last two years of his pastorate, there was much sickness, and he died in 2019. This congregation has not been able to heal through these two traumatic events. Due to the relationships these members

had with both men in leadership, there has been little time for them to work through their loss.

When people are left to fend for themselves without having the necessary tools to function, the results could be detrimental to the overall operations of any group or congregation of people. In this case, there was a need for grief counseling, grief therapy, and group sessions to ensure a balanced congregation. A healthy congregation is vital to the church and its community. Just as tight-knit families need encouragement and assistance, churches need the same thing. This context is in a city where most of the churches have relationships and commonality with one another. Churches in this area tend to follow the guideline as mentioned in the Bible, “Rejoice with those who rejoice; *mourn* with those who *mourn*” (Rom. 12:15). People have shared in the pain and offered condolences when needed, but there has not been an open platform for the congregation to interact or speak on the issue at hand with one another. For this reason, compassion and care has slowly leaked from the original intentions to remaining effective and productive.

The Theology of Love has been chosen as seen through the eyes of theologians who believed and stood on the premise that God loved the world so much that he considered sacrificing his Son as the best way to prove his love for all of mankind. The study behind love will, through the scriptures, tie the Old Testament to the New Testament as a reminder to the believer that God wants what is best for his people and to the unbeliever that God is real.

John 3:16 states, “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but have eternal life.” “Indeed, God did not

send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but so that the world might be saved through him” (Jn. 3:16 NSRV). This love is unconditional, agape, and comes from God. Tony Reinke made note that Christ initiated God’s love to a sinful nation that they would one day become new, renewed, and sinless. While seeking out a clear understanding of the theology of love in a biblical sense, Reinke requested that Jason DeRouchie, Associate Professor of Old Testament at Bethlehem College and Seminary in Minneapolis provide an in-dept view.

DeRouche starts out his narration on the theology of love using “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your *heart* and with all your *soul* and with all your *might*” (Deu. 6:4-5 ESV).

All love begins with God, because in his call for us to love him, that is where we know greatest joy for eternity. God loves us by calling us to love him. And it is a call to an all-embracing love, to love him with our *heart* and *soul* — our desires, our will, and all our motivations. But bigger than that, it is a love that includes all our actions, our words, how we treat others, our perception, everything connected with our being. Our love for God is all-encompassing; it includes loving God with all our *might* (literally, all our ‘*very-ness*’), which includes all our powers, wealth, resources, everything: “our car, our wife, our social media, our clothing, our children, our house. Love for God is wholehearted, life-encompassing, and community-embracing. Everywhere we go, everything we do cries out: ‘The Lord is one in my life!’¹

If one were to put DeRouchie’s words in a shorter version, readers would see that God is everything. God created everything. Everything we have, everything we need, and everything we do belongs to Him. God gets the glory. His love stretches so far wide, so high and so deep that Paul, the Apostle says nothing shall separate us from his love.²

¹ Tony Reinke, “Jason DeRouchie Explains the Biblical Theology of Love,” Desiring God, <https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/a-biblical-theology-of-love-an-interview-with-jason-derouchie>.

² Reinke, “Jason DeRouchie Explains the Biblical Theology of Love.”

DeRouchie continued his comments saying “the biblical theology of love consists of how God changes people through his Word and how the people understand God’s love. There is a radical heart transformation. This transformation is geared towards those who are believers to learn how to love God and to love others.”³ Reinke’s interview with Jason DeRouchie reveals “this theology transforms lives and starts in the Old Testament. For example, God changes man’s heart as illustrated in the book of Deuteronomy and Ezekiel.”⁴

Love for the broken is a miracle of grace. God had to remind the people that they had been stubborn, rebellious, and unbelieving. God’s people are made to love. Lack of power impeded man from loving God and others. Deuteronomy 4:1 stated Israel was to listen to God and keep God perfectly. In this there was love through pardon and power. Romans 5:18 and Romans 8:4 there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. God changed the hearts of man thru the life of Jesus going to the cross. Jesus bore our sins. And our sins go to him, and righteousness comes to us. Our bridge to love is located in Romans 8. The only thing we owe to anyone is God’s love for to him and to others. Love for God pushes us back to the cross. It takes blood-bought miracle powers so we can love ourselves and others. We have to live in that context 1 Timothy 1:5 where Paul has charged Timothy to charge others in the church to stick to the gospel. The aim of the charge loves to turn people into lovers of God, and it magnifies the worth of God.⁵

Wesleyan Theology of Love as introduced by Ray Nothstine’s article, sums up John Wesley’s Theology of Love through the eyes of Kenneth Collins. “The connected theme of holiness and grace is a theology that arose out of nothing less than love for the lost sheep and the commitment to authentic conversion in the life of the believer.”⁶ This is the thrust of this chapter. The overall theme of this type of theology rests in God’s love

³ Reinke, “Jason DeRouchie Explains the Biblical Theology of Love.”

⁴ Reinke, “Jason DeRouchie Explains the Biblical Theology of Love.”

⁵ Reinke, “Jason DeRouchie Explains the Biblical Theology of Love.”

⁶ Ray Nothstine, “The Theology of John Wesley,” Action Institute, <https://www.acton.org/pub/religion-liberty/volume-18-number-2/theology-john-wesley>.

for his creation. John Wesley's life reflected proof to mankind that God is patient, kind, and forgiving. From the review of John Wesley's life, his transformation came about while he was in ministry and during a time that was vital to his future in ministry. This project has been designed to raise the awareness of the class leaders to recognize how transformative the process will be leading others to Christ through love.

When reviewing articles, journals, and books regarding John Wesley's writings and teachings, I acknowledge Dave Higle's blog quoting Joe Dongell's thoughts on his perception of Wesley. A Professor of New Testament at Asbury Theological Seminary, Joe Dongell, found himself "stunned" by what he read about love.⁷ Dongell concluded that love played the most prominent role in Wesley's thinking about the transformative aspects of our life with God.⁸ This project is geared towards the love Dongell writes about in his collection on John Wesley. As a leader of the church, one would want this proclamation of how love rushed through the lives of the people like a tsunami to be experienced and transformative.

There were five points Dongell provided his readers to meditate on. They are as follows: (1) scriptural love is to love as Jesus loved. For Wesley, we look to Jesus to learn what love is: we are to love as Jesus loved. (2) Love is prior to good actions. Love is a matter of the heart and is the motive for loving actions. (3) Love's origin is from God himself. The Epistle of First John tells us clearly that "Love comes from God" (1 Jn. 4:7, 8). (4) Love is a gift from God. We should seek to receive love from God since love does not originate in us but is a gift. (5) Love poured out is a mighty force. "Love poured out

⁷ Dave Higle, "Thrive in Five: Understanding God's Love," The Wesleyan Church, <https://www.wesleyan.org/15559-2>.

⁸ Higle, "Thrive in Five: Understanding God's Love."

by God through the Spirit is a mighty force set loose in the deepest chambers of the heart and community.”⁹ God’s love has both internal and external effects: “infused love expels sin from the heart” (there is no room for sin in a heart filled with love). It also produces outward holiness expressing the same passion and mission toward others as God himself.¹⁰ Each of these points provide the viewers of Dongell’s writings with a look at God’s nature. His character can be seen and felt throughout the thoughts of Dongell. Primarily, this article is saying that God is love.

Jonathan Leeman defines love as “something in you attracts me to your good. Furthermore, the good that I want for you has a fixed and a certain content to it, God. God is the good that God lovingly wants for others, and he’s good that we should lovingly want for others.”¹¹ We should not build our entire theology on one word. We need to look at the many types of love and how those come together to determine true love. Leeman adapted Augustine’s defining the types of love as the love of God and the love of self.¹² Love should always be centered on God. The Father’s love for his son is centered on God. Father, Son, and the Spirit is always centered on God through the Trinity. When God loves humanity, he draws us into his love for himself. We are drawn into divine love. Our love needs to remain God-centered. Knowing that God made us in his image, and he loves us as he has created us. It was our thinking we did not need God that caused sin. God reminds us that we did not bring anything to the table at creation;

⁹ Hagle, “Thrive in Five: Understanding God’s Love-The Wesleyan Church.”

¹⁰ Hagle, “Thrive in Five: Understanding God’s Love-The Wesleyan Church.”

¹¹ Logos Bible Software, “What Is Love? The Unexpected Theology of Agape,” 9 Nov. 2022, YouTube Video, <https://youtu.be/OGTjvtrpgzo>.

¹² Logos Bible Software, “What Is Love? The Unexpected Theology of Agape.”

however, his love for us is what gives us the opportunity to enjoy life. We do not deserve it, but we are given new life and new opportunities. When we are talking about agape love, we are talking about God loving us despite our sins. Contrary to what we deserve, God loves us even more.¹³

In leading members of this context, class leaders have a duty to teach members about this theology of love. God's love is unconditional no matter what has happened in their lives. This teaching process will help the members to learn how to live ~~out~~ their lives as believers. In this living out their lives, class leaders will help members to understand who God is and what he likes and dislikes. It is important to know God and the types of love he offers for his creation.

There is an understanding that this love connects or includes the essence of God. It transforms the believers as they walk in the more excellent way of life. Mildred Bangs Wynkoop's book describes love and the dynamic of Wesleyan.

The thesis of this book is that love is the dynamic of Wesleyanism. After any substantial research into John Wesley's writings, one becomes aware of the high importance of love to his theology and preaching concerns. No matter which door one enters into his thinking holiness, sanctification, perfection, cleansing, faith, man, God, salvation, or any other not only does each of these begin to flow together and intertwine with the others, but the whole is channeled inevitably into love. Rather than Wesley representing a theology of holiness, it would be more faithful to his major emphasis to call it a theology of love.¹⁴

I agree with Wynkoop's statement regarding the Wesleyan theology of love. She considers the whole character of God and God's display, definition, and actions on love. God is already holy; however, it includes everything he is as mankind's creator. The

¹³ Logos Bible Software, "What Is Love? The Unexpected Theology of Agape."

¹⁴ Mildred Bangs Wynkoop, *A Theology of Love: The Dynamic of Wesleyanism*, 2nd ed., (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press 2015), 21.

statement on how God's character flows together and intertwine gives the believer an additional burden of ensuring his walk with God aligns with who God is.

Wynkoop listed nine implications of a Theology of Love. They are as follows: "Love is deeper than the popular concept of love. Love implicates us in ethics, Love is a uniquely personal thing. Love is "happiness (in Wesley's sense of the word). Love is never superficial. Love "sturdies" the soul. Love is creative. Love is out-reach. Love is psychologically oriented."¹⁵ Each of these implications touches on the life of the class leader in this context. The class leader's approach to each member of the congregation should be focused on what connects them and what holds their individual and group relationships together.

Thomas Oord writes, "Wesleyan Theology has been called a theology of love. John Wesley championed love as a central divine attribute, and he characterized the holy life as one devoted to loving God and loving others as oneself. While Christians often say love is central to their faith, they act in their professional lives and scholarship as if they hate-love."¹⁶ These two statements are essential to the proposed planned project. Loving one another and loving others are two elements that drive the success or failure of a church. Living a life of faith through love cannot be separated between the professional life and the church life if one is to be effective and productive. This article speaks briefly about Christians not wanting to complete research on love because they believe it is not a respectable scientific endeavor. However, if one studies the Bible he or she will find the

¹⁵ Wynkoop. *A Theology of Love*, 28-30.

¹⁶ Thomas Jay Oord, "Integrating Psychology of Love with John Wesley's Theology of Love," Religion Online, <https://www.religion-online.org/article/integrating-psychology-of-love-with-john-wesleys-theology-of-love/>.

lack of love and respect for the fellow man impeded the church from moving forward in ministry. He defined love in the following manner. “To love is act intentionally, in sympathetic/empathetic response to others (including God), to promote overall well-being.”¹⁷ Wesley’s definition of love appeared to fluctuate or not be consistent at times, the overall meaning adds to the research that relates to Paul, the apostle’s more excellent way found in the letters to the church in Corinthians.

In an interview with Keith Getty, John Piper talks about his journey as a pre-med student and his transitioning to seminary. His life as a child was full of love and joy. He stated that he wondered why anyone would want to kick against the love he and his family had in sharing the love of Jesus. During 2009 at the Park Community Church in Chicago, Illinois, John Piper gave his audience a bird’s-eye view of his personal journey. His pathway from medical school to seminary was one filled with his love for learning. He allowed himself to be engulfed in the teachings of Clyde Kilby, C. S. Lewis, and Harold John Ockenga. Ockenga was his crossover into seminary. After listening to Ockenga on a campus radio show, Piper said these words, “And God created in my heart at that time a desire to study and understand the word of God that has never died.”¹⁸ His desire for God grew immensely as he matriculated through seminary. His testimony evolved around his past, present, and future. The bridge that he talks about flows from his high school experiences, his med school appetite for learning more, and now his journey through seminary has been the catalyst of what he believes he has been called to do. In John Piper’s life, each chapter from childhood, has played a vital role shaping his love for

¹⁷ Oord, “Integrating Psychology of Love with John Wesley’s Theology of Love.”

¹⁸ Keith Getty, “Ask Pastor John,” Desiring God, <https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/who-is-john-piper>.

God into a ministry. In this lecture, John Piper expounded on the true essence of the theology of love. “Dan Fuller introduced me, through scripture and through Jonathan Edwards, to the truth that *God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in him*. This was the seed from which has grown all the books I have written. The fact that God pursued his glory and my joy in the same act of worship was the most explosive truth I have ever learned. The sources were the Bible and Edwards.”¹⁹ Piper founded Desiring God Ministries, aiming to “spreading a passion for the supremacy of God in all things for the joy of all peoples through Jesus Christ.”²⁰ John Piper’s passion was for all mankind to know God and for mankind to desire him. The most important thing about John Piper’s message is for one not to waste his life and lose it but to know Him in power and authority. Piper stated that our impediments to knowing God is one’s selfishness and focus on self. The other impeding factor to one knowing God is to make the act of love life a sustaining factor. Piper’s experience in this dilemma is that desire for God turns into my desires, my cravings, and are hindered in loving other people because self-desire reigns above God-desire.²¹

“This compassionate, according to John Piper, teaches us to deny ourselves and take up the cross and follow him” (Mk. 8). When teaching classes or leading people to Christ, there is a need for leaders to look at what the word of God says. This text in Mark is the basis of what the believer is to learn about Jesus. Our desire should be for God and

¹⁹ John Piper, “The Pastor as Scholar: A Personal Journey,” April 2, 2013, video of lecture, https://youtu.be/EWPAte8_fho.

²⁰ John Piper, “The Pastor as Scholar: A Personal Journey.”

²¹ John Piper, “Desire,” Passion Conference, 2020, Atlanta, January 7, 2020, video of the lecture, <https://youtu.be/wNUK05tHIWM><https://youtu.be/wNUK05tHIWM>.

Him alone. It is not one's individual desire but the desire to follow God thoroughly."²²

Class leaders in a spiritual setting teach church members, the longing to please God should be utmost. Hearts should be focused on allowing or giving the leaders of the church an opportunity to share the gospel of Jesus Christ pointing towards him only.

Piper's stand on desire exposes those who want to please themselves with the façade of having the form of godliness but denying the power of the Holy Spirit.²³

Werner Jeanrond, a systematic theologian, stated in his book on love:

No experience of love — however intense, emotionally charged and sweet it may be — removes the powerful experience of difference. The human desire for community or union with other persons, or with God, originates not only in recognizing likeness and mutuality but also in the awareness and actual experience of difference and otherness. Difference provides the necessary energy for all forms of love. The human desire for the other subject arises from the experience of difference or radical difference. No experience of love can ever remove from us our individuality, including our always personal journey towards death, though it can make that journey through life towards our always personal death different. Love has the potential to transform our lives. Love makes a difference.²⁴

This discussion is essential to congregations and small-cell groups. Each group consists of individuals who want to be a part of something and part of other human groups sharing and collaborating even though they are different but have like minds.

Historically, love played a variety of roles in the Bible. For example, Jeanrond stated Proverbs 13:24 love was used in corporal punishment when raising children by not sparing the rod in disciplinary actions. Infidels were persecuted and witches burned out of love for their souls. Changes in the understanding of personhood require changes in the

²² John Piper, "Desire."

²³ John Piper, "Desire."

²⁴ Werner G. Jeanrond, *A Theology of Love* (London, UK: Bloomsbury Publishing Publishers, 2010), 4.

understanding of love and vice versa.²⁵ The Bible reflects some of these practices as discussed during the reign of the priesthood under Eli and the leadership of those Paul set up as leaders in the church at Corinth. Eli was the head priest in the Old Testament. He loved the people and God and honored the position. However, his sons mistreated those who were in the temple and those who attended the temple. The former slaves who were appointed leaders in the New Testament church mistreated those under them and the church suffered in the name of love.

Paul wrote of a more excellent way to live and love. In this project, a review of basic biblical principles will be discussed along with providing participants with a pre- and post-survey to assess the process. Bible basics were not the key to the traumatic events that were mentioned in this chapter, however, the principles were designed and implemented.

Implementing programs and strategic plans assisted organizations involved in the process of healing from tragedy and traumas. It took one act of love whether it is for mankind, business, a building, a tradition or for self, through tragedies and suffering, people gathered their expertise in various vocations with their hearts geared towards the love of others and collected data and financial backing to help rebuild lives and rebuild communities.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer believed the church struggled in having a poor concept of the scriptures or lack of reading them led to congregants knowing what leaders wanted as opposed to what Jesus wanted. Bonhoeffer classified the means of grace as either being, cheap or costly. Cheap grace as defined by this theologian “is the mortal enemy of our

²⁵ Jeanrond, *A Theology of Love*, 10.

church. Our struggle today is costly grace. Cheap grace means grace as bargain-basement goods; cut-rate forgiveness, cut-rate sacrament; grace as the church's inexhaustible pantry, from which it is doled out by careless hands without hesitation or limit. It is grace without a price, without costs."²⁶

Part one series on grace and discipleship defines costs as the price one must pay to disciple others. Bonhoeffer continued to say "the price of discipleship costs everything. It is costly because it condemns sin and grace because it justifies the sinner. Grace is costly because God paid the price in the carnation and the crucifixion. He believed that costly grace seeped away as the world was Christianized and the Church was secularized."²⁷

Dr. William Curtis commented in his sermon on "Costly Discipleship" that a leader's risk of not doing a task well suffers the consequences. At what cost are the leaders willing to pay to make disciples? There are times when leadership will have to go up against the traditions of the church rather than the Word of God, because it holds more power from the people within the congregation. In this chapter, the need for intentional human connection is necessary to advance the kingdom of God. Leaders need to do things better and not so much as differently. Doctor Curtis stated to commit Jesus' teachings that there is a cost to living as his disciple, spiritually whole and spiritually healthy. A disciple's life is convicted, and love is the most rational act in every human

²⁶ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York, NY: Touchstone, 1995), 33-35.

²⁷ Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, 33-35.

exchange. The challenge was given, and a question was asked of the congregants, “What would it take for leaders to live in this culture to be effective in disciple-making?”²⁸

Bonhoeffer and Curtis’ messages regarding cheap and costly discipleship makes a declaration on the success or failure of the life of the church. First Corinthians 13:1 says, “If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.” One can build great buildings, have phenomenal programs in their churches, build websites, and have many gifts both spiritual and physical, however, if the motives behind what we do are not rooted and grounded in love, the result could end in failure and defeat.

Walter C. Wright’s book cover page shows a group of people sitting on ~~in~~ a raft with paddles looking in the same direction and it appears they are traveling in the same direction. This is what relational theology looks like. Eugene Peterson, a professor at Regent College started this in the Praise for Relational Leadership section of Walter Wright’s book, “Leadership is a way of living that suffuses everything we do and are. Leadership is a way of being a family and marriage, a way of being among friends, a way of going to work, a way of climbing mountains, centrally a way of following Jesus—all of which things he does and reflects upon.”²⁹ The Class Leader ministry in this context was designed by John Wesley as a small cell group that would engage as a family, walking, and working together to build the congregation spiritually and physically. The

²⁸ William Curtis, “Discipleship by Counting Cost,” United Theological DMin Intensive Week 2023, Dayton, OH, January 24, 2023, video of lecture, <https://united.hosted.panopto.com/Panopto.com/Pages/Viewer.aspx?id=7c7e6b83-5fa2-4f4a-8322-af9700eac2cc>.

²⁹ Walter C. Wright, Jr., *Relational Leadership: A Biblical Model for Influence and Service* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 8, ProQuest eBook Central, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/dtl/detail.action?docID=3317076>.

leadership training in this project will gather the team to promote wellness through actions of love and brotherhood. The overall theme focuses on following Jesus through the scriptures and practice.

Within Walter Wright's book on relational theology lies the theology of servant leadership. Chapter Two of this book is entitled *Shepherds: Servants are Assigned to Care for their Sheep*. The online Cambridge Dictionary defines care as the process of protecting someone or something and providing what that person or thing needs.-In the first chapter, Wright suggests "that leadership is a relationship— a relationship in which one person seeks to influence the thoughts, behaviors, beliefs, or values of another person."³⁰ Wright continued writing about Christians who love God serving selflessly and not for themselves. As an example of what love looks like in a relationship, Wright's leadership is about vision. It is about tomorrow, hope, and mission. Leadership articulates a compelling vision for tomorrow that captures the imagination of the followers and energizes their attitudes and actions in the present. It gives meaning and value to living. Leadership in community focuses the dreams and commitments of the people on a shared vision of the mission that brings them together, and then leadership works with the people to ensure the mission is accomplished. Leadership is a relationship of influence that points people to a shared vision that shapes their living today in such a way that the vision is realized. The key element in servant leadership is a relation.

Relational theology was illustrated in the New Testament from the encounter the slave Onesimus had with the Apostle, Paul in chapter two of Wright's book. Onesimus had to step away from the normal routine of life to discover his new life through God's

³⁰ Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary, "Care," Cambridge Dictionary, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/care>.

love and developed a relationship with his mentor and friend. Onesimus was transformed by refreshing or renewing his mind and life. After receiving proper training and instruction, Onesimus was sent back to his old community to restore broken relationships and serve others without reserve. Paul's relationship with Onesimus developed into what the Class Leader ministry would closely work on after the project was completed. The developing factors are to lead with purpose and to remain in that posture. The developing factors are to lead with purpose and to remain in that posture. Caring and loving one another were two unique characteristics drawn from this unique face-to-face contact. Onesimus received education and discipling lessons during his time with the apostle.³¹ Another factor seen in this relationship building is the creation of bonding with members of the Class Leader ministry is vital to being a unified body. Although Onesimus was a slave, he learned to become a servant for all he encountered. This is the perfect example of a person transforming and becoming a lover of God and mankind.

Dr. Cynthia Johnson's article, "God is Love: The Theology of Love," started off with a discussion about Paul and his desires for the believer. The scripture she used was Ephesians 3:18-19 which says, "I pray that you may have power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God."

Dr. Johnson talks about utilizing two types of love when trying to understand God's love. Although there are other types of love to consider in the process of understanding God's love, this article provided the readers with terms, eros, and agape love. Eros has been suggested to be the type of love where people meet, come together to

³¹ Wright, *Relational Leadership*, 38-40.

assess one another. There may be a desire for two people to want to be together and soon start building a relationship as a couple. As a result of being attracted physically, this couple may want to have children and then spend the remainder of their lives together. “*Eros* is aimed at that which has value because it is worth loving in some way. The value attracts one and evokes “love” from the beholder. The love which is *eros* is based upon and motivated by the desire for value. *Eros* is egocentric and revolves around selfish behaviors.”³² When using the words ‘desire for value,’ what comes to mind is Paul’s reflection on his desire that people would know and love God. With this knowledge at the forefront of the theology of love, God’s agape love comes into play. There are no egos and selfish behaviors in agape love.

The description of agape love provided by Dr. Johnson is “*Agape* is God’s love that is spontaneous, unmotivated, and creative. It is not “attracted” by loveable quality, but desires to pour forth upon those without value, upon the unlovable and defiled. Divine love seeks out those for whom no one cares, those whom society would generally reject and detest, and creates value.”³³ The two descriptions of love as Dr. Johnson has outlined have very different meanings even though they have value. She stated that the value held in *eros* is pointed at individuals who seek that value from one another. Where agape love comes from God and is everyone without barriers. God so loved the world indicated he loved everyone. *Eros* love promotes selfish agendas. During the Class Leader training, the various types of love will be addressed to ensure each participant becomes knowledgeable enough to share their learning experiences with their small cell

³² Cynthia Johnson, “God is Love: A Theology of God’s Love,” Cynthia Johnson, <https://www.drcynthiajohnson.com/gods-love-theology/>.

³³ Johnson, “God is Love: A Theology of God’s Love.”

group. Knowing the difference between God's love and love that depends upon the other person loving you back will be helpful for individuals learning more about God and his attributes.

This theology or the study of the nature of God and religious belief³⁴ is provided through scripture text provided by Dr. Johnson as follows, "This is love, not that we loved, but that He loved us unconditionally (1 Jn. 4:10), while we were yet sinners (Rom. 5:8), while we were weak and helpless (Rom. 5:6), and when we were enemies of God (Rom. 5:10). In this wicked state, humanity was justified by the blood of Jesus, saved from His holy wrath, and reconciled to God (Rom. 5:8-11). Each of these texts reveals the nature of God. In that he loves mankind unconditionally. Unconditionally means he has no reservations about his creation. Unconditionally meaning his love is complete. There are no barriers to God's love. In this study of God's nature his love extends to the weak and helpless. While mankind deserved to die in his sins, God provided a way of escape through his son Jesus Christ. That kind of love can only come from God.

Dr. Johnson quoted J. I. Packer from his *Knowing God* book. He explains that God's grace working in humanity, "is intended to make us capable of, and actually to lead us into, the exercise of love, trust, delight, hope and obedience Godward—those acts which, from our side, make up the reality of fellowship with God, who is constantly a king Himself known to us."³⁵ This explanation weighs heavy because Packer indicated God is constantly moving his people. God leads believers to display new life in him to lead others to him.

³⁴ Johnson, "God is Love: A Theology of God's Love."

³⁵ Johnson, "God is Love: A Theology of God's Love."

Drawn from the love that God displays towards mankind is the same kind of love God expects his believers to show to others. Dr. Johnson captures the very essence of God's love through the scripture text Matthew 22:37-40 "He said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the greatest and first commandment." The text reminds us that God's love is always moving. It is an action that continues on a daily basis.

Why does love matter? Amie Gordon reported in her article that it is all about the support that matters. Whether the relationship is toxic or not, support for one another always matters. Other elements in relationships to be considered are acceptance, security, and stability. Times of uncertainty can also represent opportunities for growth. Forced out of our usual routines, we can reassess and remember what is important. With global uncertainty, investing more in our relationships is a safe, practical, and healthy choice. Dr. Amie Gordon quoted the following words. "We need love now, more than ever."³⁶ I agree with Dr. Gordon. Since the Covid-19 pandemic and other crisis situations, there seems to be a growth in the Pittsburgh area of small businesses, people supporting businesses in the area and families seem to be more close-knit. This article suggests in maintaining relationships, for partners, associates and members of congregations, there needs to be open communication and honesty. Forgiveness is the key to getting along, as well. Jesus forgave sin or wrongdoing. Relationships are not perfect and people who make mistakes should not be punished for every digression.³⁷

³⁶ Amie M. Gordon, "The Fundamentals of a Strong Relationship," Psychology Today, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/articles/202008/love-what-really-matters>.

³⁷ Gordon, "The Fundamentals of a Strong Relationship."

This article added a personal touch on relationships and had some scripturally based information. The phrase used in the article, “paying attention to one another,” reflects on the commission designed by the discipleship model it reflects on our all to discipleship as mentioned in Matthew 28: 19-20 (KJV), “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” Paying attention to one another will at times lead you to speak directly, offering them Jesus Christ as the Savior of their lives, and building relationships for discipleship. Paying attention to others will include family and how one interacts with them. There must be an investment in the lives of others. In the lives of people there will be outside forces that may interject themselves and cause chaos or even delay in building or even reconnecting. People who want to be together and who want to make things work will have to take time to work with each other and will take time to work on themselves for the betterment.

Dr. Gordon made some key points as to how love, building relationships, and maintaining those connections are important in the lives of not only couples but groups of people as well. She did not use scripture as a response to how she perceived love to be through her research, however, each point she addressed in this article reflected some spiritual bases. For example, when speaking of relationships, the writer of Ephesians chapter five (KJV) starts off saying “Follow God’s Example.” Dr. Gordon addresses love in her article talking about love. Walking in the way of love is the theme of Ephesians chapter five. In Ephesians 5:21 believers are instructed to submit to one another. Wives are instructed to submit to their own husbands. In verse twenty-eight, husbands are to

love their wives. Husbands are to build up their wives and wives are likewise to do the same. In relationships, Dr. Gordon strongly suggested that each person had the responsibility to build, communicate, and connect to survive.

Conclusion

In conclusion each of the theologians and other writers mentioned in this chapter, provided readers with an opportunity to meditate on the nature and character of God through his word. The meaning of love was discussed and compared by other attributes of love. Theology of love gives believers insight as to who God is and who he wants his believers to be. Studying the character of God also provides the believers a personal look at God and gives an example of how to live, especially in the time of a global pandemics and crisis situations. As one writer stated, Covid-19 and the separation of people in the workplace provided families an opportunity to come together and regrow their relationships. Even though it was a rough time for many, this was also a time to reestablish, reunite, rejuvenate, and reflect on what was and still is more important in family lives.

When believers reflect on why God loved the world and giving his only son, there is a great opportunity to see transformation take place. This transformation will grow the desire to be like God and to please him more. The desire to please him will take precedence over selfish aspirations. Once transformation takes place, change can happen and will happen within oneself and will attract the attention of loved ones who celebrate the growth process.

This project is designed for church members, church families, and leaders to seek out the scriptures for basic biblical guidance on how to bring back love, trust, and integrity in the church. Bible studies, preaching, and teaching will be the focus of that biblical guidance. Utilizing First Corinthians 12:13 and First Corinthians chapter thirteen will provide the backdrop for this project. Each participant will be drawn to what God has to say about rebuilding, refocusing, and revitalizing Homewood African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. After delving into the material provided to the participants, application and implementation will take place to provide a variety of concepts and workplace practices.

CHAPTER FIVE

INTERDISCIPLINARY FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

Homewood African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church experienced a decline in membership almost thirty years. Possible causes of decline could be related to the economic downfall of the community, drugs, violence overwhelming the residents, the closing of some schools, and unemployment. However, within the walls of the church, the death of two long-term leaders between 1996 and 2019 left this church with a void. A newly assigned pastor was presented to the church with the expectation to carry on without possibly noticing there were those who felt hopeless, helpless, and disconnected. There was no lack of leadership; however, no one stepped forward to address the issues of life this church was going through.

If Homewood African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church received basic biblical training in the concept of love and its effects on people groups, then the lay leaders would be able to gain respect and build relationships within their small cell groups. The overall purpose for this training is to establish the groundwork to replace inconsistency with stability and irrelevance with creative ways to empower the ministry through the lessons Paul, the Apostle, taught in First Corinthians chapter thirteen. Paul stated there was a more excellent way, and the way of love would prove beneficial for this context.

A Dilemma

This congregation has no plans to disperse or close down. However, the tension that exists within the walls of the church could be described through an illustration about the pains of human intimacy by Arthur Schopenhauer and Sigmund Freud. This church has been in existence since 1871. Many family members grew up in this congregation and still have roots today. With the abrupt changes in leadership, the dwindling numbers in the church, a greater number of elderly members, and having to always refocus on the new are just a few reasons why people pull away from loved ones. One example can be found in the hedgehog parable.

The story takes in consideration a group of people who want to be together but finds friction or undesirable actions that pull them apart like the pricks of the porcupine. Even though a familiar culture has them bonded as a group, there are things the group cannot agree upon or come to terms with that keep them apart. Often personalities may not click but the desire to be together prevents the desired cohesiveness.

In this case, the context had a need to come together to attempt to regain what was lost during the 1996 changeover in leadership. However, the idea of having all agree upon the new style of leadership being stringent was not accepted by all. This situation did not deter the congregation from wanting to be successful, but it did impede progress. Many tolerated the changes by being polite, but cautious. There were some who kept to themselves at times dictating what was right and wrong at a distance.

Love Is

The focus of this chapter is placed upon nonreligious studies. I will discuss theories of love mainly through the eyes of scholarly journals and books, including businesses that operate through those theories. Love is defined as a verb and a noun. As a noun, Merriam-Webster online dictionary describes love as a strong affection for another out of kinship or personal ties. One example listed is maternal love. Other descriptors are sexual love, and affection based on admiration. As a verb, the dictionary describes love to be held dearly or cherished, to feel, caress, or to thrive.¹

Psychologist José Padilla wrote an article on the six theories of love. They are the neurobiological theory of love, the triangle theory of love, the integral theory of love, the color wheel model, the attachment theory of love, and compassionate love versus passionate love. According to Padilla, falling in love involves intense feelings of attraction, with no sense of commitment. It usually occurs in the early stages of a relationship and can develop into more lasting love.²

The neurobiological theory of love, as described by S. Zeki, links the study of the mental state with brain imaging techniques. This study allows scientists to learn about romantic love and love based on maternal instincts. In this discussion of love, the writer indicates that it gives the one who is in love the ability to allow to feel, become attached, and become involved with outside or social engagement. The word used in this article

¹ Merriam-Webster Dictionary Authors, "Love," Merriam-Webster Dictionary, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/love>.

² Gema Sanchez Cuevas, "Theories of Love," Exploring Your Mind, <https://exploringyourmind.com/theories-of-love>.

can deactivate what was once unpleasant and has now become tolerable because of the newfound aspect of what they believe is the definition of love.³

Robert Sternberg's triangular theory of love proposes that love comprises three distinct but interrelated components: intimacy, passion, and decision/commitment. The emotional intimacy and the cognitive decision/commitment components are typically relatively constant in close relationships; once they are established, they are apt to endure. However, passion is less stable and much less predictable. Within this theory, individuals love each other to the extent that they experience and evidence these three components. Different combinations of the components will yield markedly different kinds of love. The triangular theory allows for eight types of love: non-love, liking, infatuation, empty, romantic, companionate, fatuous, and consummate.⁴

Sternberg's journal on the triangular theory of love indicates that there is more to love than intimacy that promotes closeness, bondedness, and connectedness.⁵ After briefly reviewing the journal, I concluded that a relationship built on intimacy takes work and intentional steps to building a relationship. The triangular components of love have their own courses of action where the overall result will determine if each result in a lasting or failing relationship. This theory of love would be considered the decision component within the triangle. The main gist of this theory, in my opinion, is

³ Semi Zeki, "The Neurobiology of Love," *FEBS Letters* 581, no.14 (May 2007): 2575-2579, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.febslet.2007.03.094>.

⁴ Julius W. Anderson, *Sternberg's Triangular Theory of Love* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Publishing, 2016), 3, <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119085621.wbef058>.

⁵ Robert J. Sternberg, "A Triangular Theory of Love," *Psychological Review* 93, no. 2 (1986): 119–135, doi:10.1037//0033-295X.93.2.119.

compatibility. One would decide whether he or she has things in common that will hold a relationship together.

Compassionate love is a practical translation for the need to serve, which was positioned by Robert Greenleaf at the core of servant leadership. Servant leadership may encourage a more meaningful and optimal human functioning with a strong sense of community in current-day organizations. In essence, we propose that a leader's propensity for compassionate love will encourage a virtuous attitude in terms of humility, gratitude, forgiveness, and altruism. This virtuous attitude will give rise to servant leadership behavior in terms of empowerment, authenticity, stewardship, and providing direction.⁶

Terry Britten and Graham Lyle released the song "What's love got to do with it," written for entertainment purposes, this song declares love being a secondhand emotion and included the words, who needs a heart when a heart can be broken?⁷ This song provided its listeners an opinion of love. The song stipulates the uselessness of love and the meaning it had according to the person it was written about. Karin Sternberg wrote, "People describe many different relationships with the word "love" despite the differences among these relationships."⁸ For this reason, many researchers believe there are different kinds of love.

⁶ Dirk van Dierendonck and Kathleen Patterson, "Compassionate Love as a Cornerstone of Servant Leadership: An Integration of Previous Theorizing and Research," Link Springer, <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10551-014-2085-z>.

⁷ Graham Lyle and Terrie Britten, "What's Love Got To Do With It by Tina Turner-Songfacts," Song Facts, <https://www.songfacts.com/facts/tina-turner/whats-love-got-to-do-with-it>.

⁸ Karin Sternberg, *Psychology of Love 101* (New York, NY: Springer Publisher Company, 2013), 36, <https://www.springerpub.com/psychology-of-love-101-9780826109354.html>.

Many of the theories described in this chapter involve taxonomies. A taxonomy classifies observed phenomena based on shared characteristics. Most taxonomies of love begin in the same place: The language of love is examined whether through an examination of film, literature, music, or firsthand accounts of people about their love life. The researcher sorts through all those accounts, examining similarities to determine what the commonalities (and differences) are among those descriptions of love. Several different techniques then can be used to sort the data.⁹ In other words, one song does not denote an overall view of the word love. Sternberg noted people write their own language of love whether they are in a relationship or alone. The perfect example of this statement was indicated in the words of the song listed above.

Another writer indicated “attachment is the first emotional bond that you form in your life. You experience it with your parents, grandparents, or siblings during infancy. You literally cannot live without these primary caregivers. In this sense, you have people who love you unconditionally. These people are willing to protect you and guide you in the journey of getting to know the world and yourself.”¹⁰ This attachment continues throughout life. Attachments or emotional bonds are also evident in the classroom environment, in intimate relationships, in small cell groups, and in the workplace. Emotional bonding is evident in sexual relations. Although the biological theory of love speaks mostly of intimate relationships, the main thread or thought process in this chapter is determining what draws people together.

⁹ Sternberg, *Psychology of Love* 101, 36.

¹⁰ Valeria Sabater, Elena Sanz, Cristina Roda Rivera, Leah Padalino, Raquel Aldana, and Gorka Jimenez Pajares, “The Biological Explanation of Love,” Exploring Your Mind, <https://exploringyourmind.com/biological-explanation-of-love/>.

Love is a central ingredient in building a strong and resilient personality. It equips us with the mobilizing chemicals such as dopamine that allow us to be aggressive, to establish goals and pursue them, to stand up for ourselves and have the energy to accomplish things. It accounts for self-confidence, a “can-do” attitude.¹¹ This description of love highlights the purpose for this project. The Class Leaders will complete the training process to build their self-confidence and encourage them to display their creative ability to empower the small cell groups of the church. This description includes the ability for the small cell groups to explore new goals and go after them for a successful ministry.

Janov suggested from his writings, studies, and sessions having the ability to love and be successful starts at the beginning of life. He stated, “When love is not made available early in life, the system “shrinks” and figuratively, does not develop the proper “love receptors.” The capacity to receive and give love will be diminished for a lifetime. In this sense, love is not an abstraction but a literal neurochemical event. Although there are different levels of love and people have various ways of expressing themselves, the relationship building of love lacks from the beginning at birth.”¹² When children have not received the type of love and nurturing that develops what he calls love receptors, their adult life will lack the ability to hold on to relationships. In this project, perhaps we have misunderstood the reason why small cell groups succeed or fail. There has often not been an opportunity, unlike this project, to assess how people feel about one another to properly be placed in a group as a good fit.

¹¹ Arthur Janov, “The Biology of Love, by Arthur Janov,” *Journal of Sex Research* 38 (2001): 381-382, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/i291235>.

¹² Arthur Janov, “The Biology of Love, by Arthur Janov,” 381-382.

Love is needed to develop the brain and our lives, to learn, create, love others, and be healthy. Pain is a warning sign that the system is in danger. The less imprinted pain there is in the system, the more access there will be lower levels. That access ultimately means harmony, balance, and ease. It means life is calm and contentment of joy, exuberance, and yes even sadness, when called for. In this love situation, there is always a desire for need. Arthur Janov states that needs drive us, and that need is the motor that pushes us into all kinds of imaginable and unimaginable outlets. The frustration of need can cause rage, and that can result in mayhem over the slightest sign of not giving in to someone's demands.¹³ Need is what pushes these small cell groups along with needing each other to complete a project or a plan of action. Need is present when strategy is in place for input. Frustration comes when the team is not working in unity, which is a sign that one wants to take over and not work well with others in a more productive manner.

Servant Leadership

Servant Leadership is defined as a legacy of love. It is a love based on giving and receiving.¹⁴ The organizations listed below are examples of the legacy of love founders exemplified not only in their personal lives but in their business adventures as well. The concept of servant leadership dates back fifty years when Robert Greenleaf described it mainly as a philosophy more than a way of life.

¹³ Arthur Janov, "The Biology of Love, by Arthur Janov," 381-82.

¹⁴ A. Z. Thompson, "Servant Leadership is a Legacy of Love," Zachariah Thompson, <https://www.zachariahtompson.com/2018/11/13/servant-leadership-legacy-of-love>.

Corporate Financial Institute offers individuals and corporations an opportunity to train in servant leadership. This organization utilizes as one of its central themes, “Servant leadership leads employees to put an optimal effort in achieving the objectives of the organization as they feel included and valued.”¹⁵ As the term suggests, servant leaders are “servants” first and leaders second. Their desire to serve is natural and innate while stepping into a leadership role is a conscious choice. At its core, being a servant means taking responsibility for meeting others’ needs. In a business setting, servant leadership means making an individual’s growth and development—personally and professionally—the first priority.

The “leadership” aspect of servant leadership, as servant leadership expert is all about vision, direction, and goals. Most leaders find themselves in positions of leadership in the first place because their foresight is better than most. Greenleaf writes that foresight is a “better than average guess about *what* will happen *when* in the future.” Servant leaders, then, empower and serve their followers to achieve a shared vision for the future—effectively “leading from behind.”¹⁶

Brother’s Brother Foundation

Brother’s Brother Foundation, also known as, BBF, was founded in 1958 by Dr. Robert Hingson to provide vaccinations and inoculations to underserved communities worldwide. Today, these efforts include regularly scheduled relief

¹⁵ CFI Team, “Servant Leadership,” Corporate Finance Institute, <https://corporatefinanceinstitute.com/resources/management/servant-leadership>.

¹⁶ Kevin Kruse, “Servant Leadership: Definition, Examples, Characteristics,” LeadX, <http://leadxorg/articles/servant-leadership-definition-examples-characteristics/>.

shipments and programmatic work under the H.I.D.E. umbrella of Healthcare, Infrastructure, Disaster Response, and Education.¹⁷

At a young age, Dr. Hingson expressed concerns for those who experienced suffering. His parents encouraged him to go into ministry, but he decided upon the medical field as a career. During his career in the medical field, the University of Pittsburgh offered him a position in 1968, and he was hired as the Chief of Anesthesiology at MaGee hospital.

His concern for those who suffered pain remained at the forefront of his mind. He was known as a “tinkerer” among his friends. Hingson developed several critical medical devices, such as the Western Reserve Anesthesia Machine, Oxygen Inhalator, and Resuscitator. With the help of colleague Waldo B. Edwards, he also developed continuous caudal anesthesia epidural administration to alleviate the pain of childbirth. In 1938, Hingson developed a painless method of inoculating patients known as the jet injector. This was perhaps his most significant contribution to medicine. Hingson’s jet injector was also used worldwide to inoculate against cholera, influenza, polio, and typhoid.¹⁸

Dr. Hingson’s love for helping others was exemplified through his servant leadership qualities. “Earl Blacklock considered Hingson to be a Christian hero. Dr. Hingson wanted to make the world a better place through his serving God using all the skills and knowledge he had. He not only wanted to help and touch lives not one person

¹⁷ Staff Authors, “About Charity Work and Non-Profit,” Brother’s Brother Foundation, <https://brothersbrother.org/about>.

¹⁸ Staff Authors, “About Our Non-Profit Founder,” Brother’s Brother Foundation, <https://brothersbrother.org/about/founder>.

at a time but hundreds of thousands at a time.”¹⁹ The city of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, has seen this foundation grow and expand through its willingness to step in to make life’s unexpected tragedies a little more bearable for the people Hingson encountered daily.

Hingson formed Brother’s Keeper; after a Nigerian medical student suggested that “We don’t need a keeper; we need a brother,” the organization was renamed Brother’s Brother Foundation.²⁰ Over time, the organization’s mission focused specifically on providing vaccinations and other medical assistance to impoverished regions.²¹

Hingson invented a portable respirator anesthesia gas machine and resuscitator called the Western Reserve Midget. This machine is highly transportable and allows for the delivery of a short-term, general anesthetic. He also performed extensive experiments in the use of anesthesia to prevent pain during childbirth. These efforts won international recognition and led to the invention of the continuous caudal anesthesia techniques. The “peace gun,” as it is known, allows the inoculation of 1,000 persons per hour with several simultaneous vaccines.²²

Brother’s Brother Foundation envisions a world where aid leads to sustainable development. Some of the areas they have sown into are healthcare, infrastructure,

¹⁹ Earl Blacklock, “Christian Heroes: Dr. Robert Hingson,” Open the Word, <https://opentheword.org/2015/04/13/christian-heroes-dr-robert-hingson/>.

²⁰ Kelly Hayes, “The History of Chick-fil-A: From Small Diner to Fast-Food Giant Closed on Sunday,” Fox 5 New York, <https://www.fox5ny.com/news/the-history-of-chick-fil-a-from-small-diner-to-fast-food-giant-closed-on-sunday>.

²¹ Hayes, “The History of Chick-fil-A.”

²² Hayes, “The History of Chick-fil-A.”

disaster response, education, providing resources as requested to partners and supporting programs worldwide.

Brother's Brother Foundation continues to take shape as they work to identify the areas in which they can have the greatest impact. They started to make great strides through the launch of two projects. Casa San Jose is a local Pittsburgh organization that BBF has partnered with to sew washable feminine hygiene pads for school age girls in Latin American countries. Through this partnership with Himalayan Healthcare, BFF was able to install bathroom facilities in Nepal for proper sanitation.

Brother's Brother Foundation's Disaster Response program focuses on working together with first responders and relief agencies in the affected areas to provide ongoing support. This includes the sourcing and staging of resources, creating partnerships with transportation networks, and working with local partners and other VOADs (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster), along with engaging with volunteers to sort and send disaster relief supplies.²³

This organization started out as an idea to help the underserved and has since grown into an international organization of helps. This display of love has truly become a legacy in the life of Dr. Hingson due to his concern for others in need. He chose not to go into ministry and took a more direct approach to serving his community and the world proved to have provided his family with a great legacy. This is an example of the type of relationship Homewood African Methodist

²³ Staff Authors, "About Charity Work and Non-Profit."

Episcopal Zion Church leadership and members would benefit from in becoming a successful ministry in and throughout the community.

Chick-Fil-A

Another example of what has been identified as a legacy of love is Chick-fil-A. Formerly known as Dwarf Grill located in the suburbs of Atlanta, Georgia was founded by S. Truett Cathy in 1946. The main theme for Chick-Fil-A is “We change the world, and ourselves, by our response to unexpected opportunities.”²⁴ The first fully operating restaurant was opened as a family-owned business in 1967.

Not only was Cathy a businessman, but he also wrote many books and is best known for his business acumen and for his charity. He also modeled life on biblical principles and family life. The online account of S. Truett Cathy’s life covers his legacy. This legacy started out as a response to a dream and a vision of one wanting to do better for himself and others. History reports “each of their restaurants is a locally owned small business, operated by an independent franchisee Operator who is committed to the neighborhood he or she serves.”²⁵ Despite controversial issues with LGBTQ, and not being opened on Sunday, this company was named America’s favorite brand in January of 2012. Two of the major issues involved with Chick-fil-A are:

Personal connections are important at Chick-fil-A, as Operators engage with and support local communities through fundraisers, charitable donations and getting involved with causes that matter to their communities and guests. Operators frequently work to support local schools and organizations.

²⁴ Staff Authors, “Dwarf House - Chick-fil-A Company History,” Chick-fil-A, <https://www.chick-fil-a/About/History>.

²⁵ Truett Cathy, “This Is How It Started,” Chick-Fil-A-One, <https://www.chick-fil-a.com/stories/news//this-is-how-it-started>.

Our Operators' investment in Team Members goes beyond wages, with leadership roles and promotions that lead to management positions, opportunity to earn college scholarships (we've invested more than \$75 million in college scholarships for Team Members since 1973), and respect for work-life balance (closing on Sundays).²⁶

Not only does Chick-fil-A offer valuable customer service but their food delivery is impressive. Balanced and nutritional meals are important so this restaurant can meet the needs of various tastes. Chick-fil-A also works toward meeting the needs of families by including large tables and hand-crafted design elements reflecting their heritage and the local communities.

Some of the noted achievements for Chick-fil-A are as follows:

Chick-fil-A was named top fast-food restaurant chain in 2019. In 2019 Chick-Fil-A was also named best brand for overall experience and most respected Quick-Service Brand. In 2018, Chick-Fil-A was named the "Best Brand for Overall recognized for customer experience again in the 2018. In 2018 they were named Chick-fil-A "Best Franchise Brand."²⁷

This not-for-profit organization continues to serve the people through its participation in the True Inspiration Awards, providing scholarships to over 6,000 team members. Today, more than 1,200 twelve restaurants across forty-seven states donate surplus food to local soup kitchens, shelters, and nonprofits through Chick-fil-A Shared Table, and that number continues to grow each year. To date, more than ten million meals have been donated to serve those in need.²⁸

²⁶ Truett Cathy, "This Is How It Started."

²⁷ Chick-fil-A Authors, "Chick-fil-A Awards," Comparably, <https://www.comparably.com/companies/chick-fil-a/awards>.

²⁸ Chick-Fil-A Inc., "Chick-fil-A Foundation Announces 2020 Priorities to Address Education, Homelessness, Hunger," PRN News, <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/chick-fil-a-foundation-announces-2020-priorities-to-address-education-homelessness-hunger-300960008.html>.

Mr. Cathy chose the name Chick-fil-A.” The “Chick” to represent the signature menu item, and the “fil-A” as a play on the word “filet,” with a small twist. He replaced “et” with “A” to represent the “Grade-A” quality of the children.²⁹ Barbara Manko’s understanding of Chick-fil-A’s success is that it is an unconventional company managing to prosper in a high competitive retail market. Manko noted the unconventional methods of this restaurant. In her studies of this organization, she noted, Chick-fil-A restaurants are closed on Sundays and could be making billions of dollars more if they were open seven days a week. Although this restaurant has a Christian base, there are many non-Christians who spend their dollars to experience the food and the customer service. Chick-fil-A has an explicitly religious corporate mission statement, and culture. The “corporate purpose,” as stated on the Chick-fil-A website is “To glorify God by being a faithful steward of all that is entrusted to us and to have a positive influence on all who come into contact with Chick-fil-A.”³⁰ A doctoral dissertation in the early 2000s revealed evidence that the Christian-based Chick-fil-A promoted Christian values such as “love” and “justice” in both its internal and external business dealings. The author also noted that although cause and effect could not be established, Chick-fil-A had avoided illegal business behaviors and scandals of the kinds discovered at numerous other U.S. corporations of the time.³¹

²⁹ Dick Parker, “Where Did the ‘A’ in Chick-Fil-A Come From?” Chick-fil-A, <https://www.chick-fil-a.com/stories/lifestyle/where-did-the-a-in-chick-fil-a-come-from>.

³⁰ Parker, “Where Did the ‘A’ in Chick-Fil-A Come From?.”

³¹ Barbara A. Manko, “Analyzing an Unconventional Success Story Chick-Fil-A Fast Food Restaurants in the USA,” Sciendo, <https://sciendo.com/article/10.2478/manment-2019-0087>.

Goodwill Industries

Goodwill Industries was founded in 1902 by Rev. Edgar J. Helms, a Methodist minister and early social innovator. He collected used goods from wealthy Bostonites and hired people to do repairs, resold items to pay wages or gave them to those in need. His system of donors, shoppers and job seekers helping each other has been at work in South Carolina for almost fifty years.³²

The online biography of Edgar James Helms stated he was a man admired for his common character and entrepreneurial vision. Rev. Helms is credited as the founder of the movement that grew into Goodwill. Helms was born near Malone, New York, on January 19, 1863. As a young man, he had tried his hand at law and newspaper publishing but felt called to the ministry. Helms and two fellow students requested that the City Missionary Society support them in opening a full-scale settlement house in the North End. Instead, Helms was offered a struggling inner-city mission in Boston's South End, Morgan Chapel, established a generation earlier by Henry Morgan. The young minister was appalled at the conditions faced by immigrants who found themselves in a new country without jobs and sometimes desperate for food, clothing and shelter. Using burlap bags from Thomas Wood and Company, Helms went door-to-door in Boston's wealthiest districts asking for donations of clothing and household goods. Helms' model differed from many charities of the day, emphasizing that donated goods could be sold for profit and that money would be used to pay workers who helped refurbish those goods. Helms hired people in need where many of whom were considered unemployable — to do this repair work. Although it wasn't until 1915 that the term Goodwill

³² Truett Cathy, "This Is How It Started."

Industries® was coined, 1902 became known as the year Goodwill was born. With the help of Methodist Church funding, Helms went on to help establish Goodwill organizations across the United States. Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam spoke these words in his eulogy: “[Helms] was blessed with a fine mind, a great heart, and a strong will. His unusual business ability, passionate devotion and physical strength enabled him to serve his fellow man, who were uninterested in charity, but yearned for a chance.”³³

In 2002, during Goodwill’s Centennial Celebration, a bronze medallion in Helms’ honor was added to The Extra Mile — Points of Light Volunteer Pathway in Washington, D.C., the only national monument that honors individuals who selflessly championed causes to help others realize a better America. Today, Goodwill sponsors two annual national awards that honor staff members in local Goodwill organizations who exemplify Helms’ values of unselfish service, self-reliance, and a strong work ethic.³⁴

In 2010, through their involvement in Goodwill's programs, more than 170,000 people were placed into employment. They earned \$2.7 billion in salaries and wages, and as tax-paying citizens, they contributed to the community. Goodwill also generates income to help businesses and the federal government fill gaps caused by labor shortages, time constraints, and limited space or equipment. Local Goodwill branches train and employ contract workers to fill outsourced needs for document management, assembly, mailing, custodial work, grounds keeping and more. Goodwill claims that more than 84 percent of its total revenue is used to fund education and career services and other critical community programs. Also in 2010, Goodwill provided people with training careers in industries such as banking, IT, and health care, as well as offering English-language training, education, transportation, and child care services.³⁵

³³ Lauren Lawson-Zilai, “Edgar James Helms (1863 – 1942),” Edgar J. Helms, <https://www.goodwill.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Edgar-J.-Helms-Bio-updated-January-2020.pdf>.

³⁴ Staff Authors, “Goodwill Industries International, Inc.” Goodwill, <https://www.goodwill.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Edgar-J.-Helms-Bio-updated-January-2020.pdf>.

³⁵ Staff Authors, “Goodwill Industries International, Inc.”

Goodwill demonstrates respect for the dignity, worth, and uniqueness of all people. People grow and build confidence when they learn and apply knowledge. People can reach their greatest potential through employment. Goodwill believes in every person's ability to define, work toward, and achieve greater independence.

Goodwill identifies gaps, evaluates opportunities, and risks, and creates solutions that significantly advance our mission. Goodwill demonstrates respect for the dignity, worth, and uniqueness of all people. People grow and build confidence when they learn and apply knowledge. People can reach their greatest potential through employment. Goodwill values solutions that result in long-term, social impact that affects multiple generations. Goodwill is now a secular nonprofit organization with no ties to any religious institutions.³⁶

In 1973, Goodwill Industries of Upper South Carolina provided job training and placement so individuals with disabilities can achieve greater independence. Its first store opened in Greenville. In 1975 Goodwill assisted 141 people and placed twenty into employment. The store expanded into the Midlands with a store in Columbia. New food service training program was established in 1998. There were about 312 people assisted and 144 obtained. 2002 saw an expansion of the program entitled, First Job Connection which opened in Berea, with Columbia, Greenville, Simpsonville, Anderson and Greer locations opening within five years. New headquarters and distribution centers open in Greenville with Subway franchise to train food service employees in 2005. The first Clearance Center opened in Greenville, South Carolina. And the New name Goodwill Industries of

Upstate/Midlands South Carolina — debuted. In 2009 a Certified nursing assistant training was launched. As a result, 17,800+ people were assisted and placed 2,800+ in employment.³⁷

In 2011, the number of persons assisted rose to 32,000+ people and placed 6,000+ in employment. In 2012, Goodwill Industries partnered with United Way of

³⁶ Diamond Buie, "Goodwill's Mission and Values: Goodwill Central and Southern In," Goodwill Indy, <https://www.goodwillindy.org/mission/>.

³⁷ Staff Authors, "Goodwill Industries of Upstate/Midlands South Carolina," Goodwill South Carolina, <https://www.goodwillsc.org/about/history/#:~:text=1973%20Goodwill%20Industries%20of%20Upper%20South%20Carolina%20founded,achieve%20greater%20independence.%20First%20store%20opened%20in%20Greenville.>

Greenville County to open First Financial Stability Center in Simpsonville. Two years later 10,000+ were placed into employment. Within another two years, Midlands headquarters opened in West Columbia including regional offices, retail store, outlet store, and Goodwill's 25th Job Connection. By the year 2019, 13,037 people obtained employment. And as early as 2021, this particular Goodwill ranked second among 156 Goodwill stores for people placed into employment, which actually grew to forty-nine attended donation centers, forty retail stores and thirty-one Job Connections.³⁸

Under the mission's section of this article, Goodwill Industries of Upstate/Midlands South Carolina is listed as a not-for-profit organization offering career services, job training, certifications and programs that help South Carolinians become independent through employment.

In addition to job opportunities at Goodwill, they help prepare and place people in careers across a wide variety of fields and do it all for free. Our career coaches work one-on-one with folks to help them find the right fit, regardless of age or skill level.

Under the Business Services section of this article this division is also a vital part of the Goodwill social enterprise. It is a collection of outsourced commercial services for companies, governmental agencies, and facilities that funds education and training for individuals looking for work, including those with disabilities and disadvantages.

One may ask "What is the purpose of Goodwill Industries?" Goodwill works to enhance people's dignity and quality of life by strengthening their communities, eliminating their barriers to opportunity, and helping them reach their full potential through learning and the power of work.³⁹ Goodwill addresses the issues and concerns of the people who live within the communities they serve. Loaded with job opportunities

³⁸ Staff Authors, "Goodwill Industries of Upstate/Midlands South Carolina."

³⁹ Staff Authors, "History of Goodwill," Goodwill Big Bend, <https://www.goodwillbigbend.org/history-of-goodwill/>.

and providing resources for the community has been an asset to this company. Goodwill operates with the spirit of servant leadership and love in mind.

Gwen's Girls

The history of how Gwen's Girls, Inc. began has its birth beginning in 1964, when Gwen Elliott saw a need for young women to be rescued from the entanglements of life while living in poverty. Gwen served in the Air Force, National Guard, and Air Force Reserve. She retired as a staff sergeant.

Elliott's military experience qualified her for an opportunity with the Pittsburgh Bureau of Police. According to Gwen Elliot's story posted on their website, she broke barriers when pursuing her career goals. She became the first African American female police officer in 1976. From that point on she was promoted to a sergeant and then commander of the police force. While serving to protect and serve in the city of Pittsburgh, Elliot became aware of the plight of the young women who became known to law enforcement. The article commented on how Elliott was determined to help those in need as an immediate and a future service to any of the young women she could assist.⁴⁰

As a response to her vision and dream, Allegheny County Children, Youth and Family Services funded her program, Gwen's Girls. In May of 2002, Gwen's Girls became a direct service organization for the county and other extended areas who had young women in need of services. This could be considered as servant leadership at its best. Gwen Elliott's life experiences led her to a point in time where much help was needed in communities where young women experiencing poverty, violence, pregnancies

⁴⁰ "Gwen's Story," Gwen's Girls, <https://gwensgirls.org/who-we-are/why-girls/>.

out of wedlock, and a general lack of general knowledge of maintaining a healthy environment.

According to Executive Director Lynn Knezevich, “Elliot was determined to establish an organization where girls could reach their full potential and she wanted girls to be viewed as an individual in a holistic manner, bringing out the best in them.”⁴¹ To accomplish this task, there have been many programs added to this organization that addresses many issues young women face today. For example, the official website describes the following services. The Academic Success Initiative program offers specialized tutoring for their clients. According to an interview produced by WQED Multimedia, it was stated that this year there is an open enrollment for virtual tutoring for kindergarten through eighth grade students. Although it is not mentioned, their main theme appears to say they are not leaving any children behind. For students who are learning remotely, this free individualized option is available for any interested parties.

After school and summer programs are offered all year round. The summer program is open to girls ages eight to thirteen, in three locations, free of charge, and operates for eighteen weeks. The uniqueness about this program is that girls will be able to connect with their peers and work with those who have experienced or are experiencing the same life challenges. There is no judging or belittling. There is a general desire to teach wholeness and build healthy relationships.

Camp Destiny is designed for an exciting summertime getaway for the girls. It includes the same age group as the afterschool program. The purpose for the summertime activity is to work on health and wellness, and to raise civic and culture awareness. There

⁴¹ “Gwen’s Girls Interview,” 2007, Produced by WQED Multimedia, video interview, <https://youtu.be/7eBdyZDS8jY>.

are also planned activities outside of the agency that include but are not limited to various amusement parks throughout the state.

Young Adult Programs such as the Black Girls Advocacy and Leadership Alliance, also known as BGALA, allows our girls to express themselves in a positive and judgement free environment. This program also teaches the girls how to develop skills and use their voice and advocate against things such as adultification, colorism, and other social injustices facing black girls today. BGALA also empowers the girls to love the skin they are in, to be leaders in their schools, and their communities.

School based and Community based Services such as the Gwen's Girls STEM Initiative is to promote interest in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics by exposing Gwen's Girl participants to captivating experiences and opportunities that promote critical thinking and problem solving, and to the breadth of STEM careers and professional opportunities through workforce initiative.⁴²

While working as a social worker with Allegheny County, I found this program to be one of great value to the at-risk teenagers I served. Staff treated the young women with respect and gave everyone involved a sense of safety and protection. I was able to observe some of the programmed activities which included teens with babies. Each of these young mothers were given the supplies and tools needed to care for their children. The annual celebrations were elegant and presented in a professional manner. Each youth was recognized for her accomplishments and the audience was able to witness the excitement and satisfaction on each face.

⁴² Kathi Elliott, "Gwen's Girls," <https://gwensgirls.org/programs/>.

Nardos Haile, a writer in the City Paper located in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, stated in her observation of a Friday fun night at Gwen's Girls as a "flurry of activity."⁴³ She saw the many talents of the young women and felt their excitement as they presented their skills. Also, Haile stated that some of the designs they made were going to be sold to help fund their programming. Haile also gave some historical facts related to the founder of Gwen's Girls. She quoted Twanda Clark Edgal, Chief Program Officer of Gwen's Girls, "people knew [Elliott] because they would see her on the news, because she put a lot of effort into trying to find girls."⁴⁴ As the readers review this great endeavor founded by a great woman, it includes Elliott's life story. Having no father or mother could have led to some disastrous events. Being brought up through segregated times along with having to endure racism during her military service duration and being the first African American woman in the police bureau taught her the life lessons she needed to pursue a servant leadership position as a lead in protecting the lives of young women.

A call center was created within Gwen's Girls to keep students out of the legal system. Joyce Gannon reported in her article that Black girls are more likely to be referred to juvenile system eleven times more than white girls. Kristy Trautman who was the director of the FISA Foundation promotes equity for women and girls. FISA carries the acronym for The Federation of Independent School Alumnae. This organization reported in their 2016 State of the Girls Report through the Heinz Endowments. They,

⁴³ Nardos Haile, "Black-led Community Spotlight: Gwen's Girls Empowers Pittsburgh Girls and Young Women," November 4, 2020, Pittsburgh City Paper, <https://www.pghcitypaper.com/news/black-led-community-spotlight-gwens-girls-empowers-pittsburgh-girls-and-young-women-18303083>.

⁴⁴ Haile, "Black-led Community Spotlight."

along with other organizations, sought to fight the disparities that have existed in the juvenile court system.⁴⁵

The foundation joined a coalition of community partners including judges, police and school officials that has worked to reduce the number of youths who end up with juvenile records. Caring Connections runs a twenty-four-hour call center that refers school administrators, police, and parents to a network of professionals who can help resolve problems and divert youths from ending up at a police station or magistrate's court. "We're trying to understand the aggression and delinquent behavior," says Elliott. "We need to understand the whole family unit, not just the youth. Far too many children, especially Black children, continue to be referred to the juvenile justice system for something as small as disorderly conduct in school. The system should not be used as a catch-all ... for those experiencing extenuating circumstances who would otherwise succeed if alternate support systems were available."⁴⁶ The program was able to address intervention and prevention at the same time. It is unique how this caring system has been designed in such a way that young women would be able to learn how to trust others and how they have been given the opportunity to start from where they are instead of having to always start over again trying to bring success to their lives.

Trailblazers completed a YouTube Women to Know segment in 2020. Maya Wanamaker, an Oakland Catholic student, chose Gwen Elliott as a trailblazer. Maya remarked in this video that Gwen Elliott inspired her because "she fought many racial

⁴⁵ Joyce Gannon, "Caring Connections May Keep Students Out of the Legal System," Next Pittsburgh, <https://nextpittsburgh.com/pittsburgh-for-all/gwens-girls-leads-new-call-center-to-keep-students-out-of-the-legal-system/>.

⁴⁶ Gannon, "Caring Connections."

injustices and used her experiences to make her stronger and smarter.”⁴⁷ I agree with Wanamaker’s statement about Elliott. Her history may have been full of discouragement, hurt, and pain, however, those are the obstacles she used as stepping-stones to be successful in life. She became a true trailblazer pouring into the lives of children she did not know but was able to address some of the same pain and hurts they were experiencing.

The GJEI, also known as the Gwendolyn J. Elliott Institute, was established to ensure proper training, research, and implementing best practices for Gwen’s Girls, Inc. The website states the mission for the institute is to provide expertise in the fields of research and training for individuals and organizations working with girls. Some of the organizations connected provide, health and wellness, probation services, participation in victim support, educational pursuits, healthy advocacy for mothers and babies, planned parenting programs, and social justice advocacy.⁴⁸ These are just a few of the services offered to Gwen’s Girls to help girls become successful and productive in society.

In May of 2022, the Pittsburgh Courier Newsroom posted a news article with says, “If you can dream it, you can do it.” Gwen Girls was celebrating twenty years of existence in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Dr. Kathi Elliott, the daughter of Gwendolyn Elliott commented, “I was the original Gwen’s Girls.”⁴⁹ Kathi Elliott and her brother were raised by their mom. She had been divorced and knew she had to support her

⁴⁷ Maya Wanamaker, “Trailblazer: Women to Know,” 2020 WQED Multimedia, video, <https://fb.watch/j-JEbDctIS/>.

⁴⁸ Kathi Elliott, “Gwendolyn J. Elliott Institute,” Gwen’s Girls, <https://gwensgirls.org/gjei/>.

⁴⁹ Courier Newsroom: “If You Can Dream It, You Can Do It: Gwen’s Girls Celebrates 20 Years.” <https://newpittsburghcourier.com/2022/05/12/if-you-can-dream-it-you-can-do-it-gwens-girls-celebrates-20-years/>.

children. She also reported to the New Pittsburgh Courier, “We would not be where we are today were it not for the consistency of our partnerships and collaborations we’ve had—because they believed in our mission; but also in the name of my mom and the relationships she created.”⁵⁰ As previously stated, Gwen’s Girls has a plethora of support from all over Allegheny County. They currently have three locations, Northside, Clairton, and the Wilkinsburg area. Since Gwen’s Girls beginning days they have serviced thousands of young women.

During the reporting process of this article, in 2016 Gwen’s Girls spearheaded their first Black Girls Equity Summit. The initial summit brought together the leaders of these systems for the purpose of addressing these disproportionate number of Black girls being represented in said systems. Out of the summit, the Black Girls Equity Alliance was formed, and the group has been meeting monthly ever since. This group is comprised of individuals across genres who have a stake in examining the causation factors, the disparities, and exploring solutions; all culminating with creating a new reality for Black children in this region.⁵¹ It appears the overall theme for Gwen’s Girls is leaving no one behind as well as having an attitude of can do better in all areas of life. This agency leaves no one out and is inclusive of all who connect with it.

Cultural Awareness

Servant Leadership can be seen in various areas of the workplace, religious institutions, and other areas of life. The words servant leadership may not be written in

⁵⁰ Courier Newsroom: “If You Can Dream It, You Can Do It.”

⁵¹ Courier Newsroom: “If You Can Dream It, You Can Do It.”

detail but there are those who respond to life in such a manner. Jean Bryant, a true trailblazer in the lives of African American culture, expressed her leadership expertise through the lives of her people and culture. Her entire life was an example of cultural awareness and the need for the people to be seen and heard. Unlike the other businesses mentioned in this chapter there is no food or sales of a product of any kind. Jean Bryant's desire was to make sure African Americans were seen as people of elegance, regal, and great talent. She displayed this vision through the Miss Black Teen pageants held from 1973 until her retirement in 2016.

As a young woman, Jean Bryant, born Jeanette Marie Roach, grew up in a loving family environment that included mixed cultures. She hailed from the state of New Jersey. Her grandmother was a descendant of New York's Shinnecock Indian Tribe. Her grandfather was a native of the state of New York from a village settled by English ancestors. There were many children coming from this family and each of them were faithful to their parents and very respectable.⁵²

At the age of eleven, Jean Bryant did not understand her value at the time. Her cousin, Gladys had told her that a book she read written by Bryant was so good that she could not put it down. However, embarrassed by it all, Jean threw the manuscript away, not realizing her worth.

Carolyn V. Callahan wrote in the Foreword of Jean Bryant's book, "Driven by a 'can do' spirit, nourished by her mother, Jeanette "Jean" Marie Roach was destined for success."⁵³ Growing up included happy times and sad times for Jean and her family. She

⁵² Jean Bryant, *How Did I Get Here? "The Force Within"* (Pittsburgh, PA: self-published, 2022), 5.

⁵³ Bryant, *How Did I Get Here?*, vii.

was an “A” student in school. However, she dropped out of high school early to marry and raise four sons. She earned her GED during the evening. Everything that Jean experienced in life, she always claimed God was in charge and took care of the things that she needed taken care of.

Jean married twice in life. Her first marriage to Crawford Daniel. They moved to a white neighborhood where she experienced her first direct response to racism. Soon after moving into her neighborhood, there was an exodus of white families, while an influx of Blacks moved into the neighborhood. She and her husband were able to rent out their first floor to another family to help supplement their income. Due to her husband’s heavy drinking and gambling, her marriage fell apart. Meanwhile her experience with racial issues in Orange, New Jersey grew deeper and deeper.

Jean was made aware of a new organization forming in her community to address the issues of gerrymandering and to elect the first black councilman in the history of Orange, New Jersey. This is where her life learning and lessons began. She decided to attend one of the meetings and she realized it was God’s work in the process. Little did she know that the comments she made in this meeting were going to catapult her into the public’s view. She was chosen as a Chair of the Women’s Division to Elect Ben Jones, an African American, to council and back the mayoral candidate, Nick Franco, a liberal. Once again, Bryant indicated God was at work. The canvassing and meetings to get those two candidates elected work out successfully.

Also, during this time in Bryant’s life, her sons were showing interest in starting a band and she became their manager. Knowing nothing about managing a band, she moved ahead and did what she knew how to do most and that was organizing. She

ensured they were part of a union to get paid; and she charged them a management fee. With very few complaints from parents, their efforts eventually paid off. Soon the band was off to better engagements that took them all over the country.

At the same time, Bryant relinquished the reigns of band manager, she was asked by Hal Jackson to lead the Miss Black Teenage America beauty pageant. With her organization skills and her eye for detail, she took on the challenge. She realized her talents as a manager, chauffeur, booking agent, and signing contracts called for a different and one may add, a higher calling in life.

Who was this Hal Jackson? He was one of the first African American radio sports announcers for Howard University baseball games and the Homestead Grays baseball games. He co-founded the Inner-City Broadcasting Corporation. Later it became first owned and operated by African Americans.⁵⁴

Bryant's thirst for success did not start as an enterprise to franchise businesses, but as an awakening to the call for people to be culturally aware of the greatness and talents of young African American children. She was a true trailblazer opening doors for youth to obtain a better education, career, living purposeful lives, and gaining the attention of the world through the eyes of pageantry. As mentioned previously, someone saw talent in her as a band manager, writer, and a leader who walked in integrity that later proved her to be the best fit for showcasing or exposing young people to various opportunities to succeed. Jean Bryant's book tells her story about the good, the bad, and the ugly she experienced. However, she told her story so her readers would be able to see the full picture of how she became successful in all she experienced in life.

⁵⁴ Biography, "Review of Hal Jackson," Our Biography, <http://www.Ourbiography.com>.

Conclusion

Exploring the various definitions and examples of love has opened areas of opportunities to improve the ministry working with the Class Leaders as a team. The text from the Berean Bible quotes Second Peter 2:1-9:

To those who through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours: Grace and peace be multiplied to you through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through the knowledge of Him, who called us by His glory and excellence. Through these, He has given us His precious and magnificent promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, now that you have escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love, or if you possess these qualities and continue to grow in them, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. However, whoever lacks these traits is nearsighted to the point of blindness, forgetting that he has been cleansed from his past sins (2 Pt. 2:1-9).

Gaining insight through the training presented to the Class Leaders will not only add to the understanding but will provide an opportunity to move towards becoming a transformative ministry.

Each of the businesses mentioned in this chapter has illustrated through the founding fathers the ability to provoke a people into wanting the best for others who were less fortunate or underserved in their communities. A transformative solution was based upon the desire to heal and deliver souls out of pain, bondage, and the inability to be productive and effective in their communities. The resolution addressed what was needed during a particular time in history. Each resolution at the time of discovery enabled those historic founders to be relevant and if specific programs are needed or could be improved upon.

The biblical foundation chapter discussed how leadership and those who follow them lacked relationship and fellowship. In the concluding portion of this foundation chapter, it was stated that working on this project would provide the members and leadership an opportunity to work alongside each other, concentrating on leading with a servant leadership attitude. It was also suggested that leading in a more excellent way through agape love, Paul presented to the people in First Corinthians chapter thirteen. Another suggested purpose for this project is to raise the awareness of what is needed to provide for a successful ministry. Within the biblical foundation chapter unification is vital to ministry. The historical foundation chapter provided a timeline of African and African Americans determined to be relevant during a time when society deemed them unfit. However, while writing this chapter, it was discovered that many people wanted to be relevant in a world that considered relevancy was destined for certain people. The historical foundation chapter talked about the fight for freedom and success and how those elements were assessed through time and planning despite the lack of economic success and strength of power within the government. African American people worked hard and planned how to best live their lives utilizing the supplies and means they had at hand. This chapter also reflected upon the good and bad times each period in history had to offer the people whether it was a storm, a war, fire, brutality, or so on. Within the history of the African American people, a remnant held on to pride in being a people of resilience and grace. This chapter also reflected upon various processes and procedures to make communities safer to live in, provide medical services, provide monies for rebuilding and safe housing, and help improve things overall.

The theological foundation chapter was written about possible healing from trauma. As I began to delve into the history of the context many intricate facets were uncovered, including unresolved and unanswered issues. However, as I moved forward into the process, the main thread to be addressed would be accessing the overall ministries within the context. I understood that everything could not be addressed all at once; nor could it be resolved through a six-week study and training period. Research completed in this foundation chapter identified how this context had been exploited by economics, violence, drugs, mental health issues, and much more. Homewood African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church is geographically located in the middle of the city of Pittsburgh. This church was at one time one of the most influential religious institutions in the city. The theological foundation chapter discussed various national and local disasters within communities that were, and some still are, low-income, underemployed, poor housing, and drug infected. Although healing and trauma will not be addressed in this project, the interdisciplinary tools used to bring about a better and more effective ministry will be conducted by identifying the various types of love that hold true to being in relationship as a group.

I gained a better understanding of providing training and study time to work through to create a transformative ministry. Understanding the issues at hand and working through them will provide an opportunity to work with the Class Leaders and working alongside them will create an atmosphere of fellowship.

CHAPTER SIX

PROJECT ANALYSIS

The process in preparation for this project was unique and a great learning experience. Starting off with a spiritual autobiography that helped shape my perspective in life as a leader as well as a forerunner in addressing what I observed as a great way to raise the awareness for the need to grow in love at Homewood African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. Writing my own spiritual history provided me with an opportunity to listen to someone's heartbeat in that of the history of the congregation I am currently serving. Homewood African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church's history consisted of perseverance and persistence as a congregation from 1871 extended to and including the current year. Their struggles appeared to have always turned into victories. However, after losing two pastors to illnesses and not being given the opportunity to share their grief and sorrow, the church was unable to restore a healthy and successful balance. Not only did the church struggle, but the community struggled as well. Homewood was once a robust community growing with a diversity of businesses and business owners, until the closure of steel mills, recessions, riots, violence and the displacement of businesses and job opportunities, this church experienced the same plights as the community.

Part of my journey in this process included speaking with members of the congregation and community which included other leaders, former members, and those

who were considered visitors. I asked what was important to them when attending church services and what could possibly be added to enhance the overall success. Many of the answers I received related to the music, the message or sermon, and giving money.

Overall, those that were asked these questions had some type of history with a church and knew some processes and protocols. Others had only experienced this context and were more geared towards liking the music and the sermons presented each Sunday.

Other comments related to how relevant the ministries operating in the context were to them. For example, some mentioned they had not heard from their Class Leaders for months and did not know what activities were going on at the church. Others stated that all their Class Leaders asked for monies for different activities but never explained to them the purpose of giving. Although Bible study was happening on a weekly basis, there were members who had no access to internet service and no computer to participate in Zoom meetings. A conference call protocol was added to the process for members to hear the lessons being taught on a weekly basis.

In 2019, I accepted a position with Homewood African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church as the Minister of Music. The newly assigned pastor appointed me to serve as “Leader of Leaders” over the Class Leader system. I also involved myself with the intercessory prayer team, and Bible class. My sole purpose was to interject myself within the congregation to serve God and the ministry of this church. I was accepted as a doctoral student at United Theological Seminary in the Leadership Development program, not realizing this journey would connect with the overall project I had chosen for the congregation at Homewood African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church.

It was apparent the COVID epidemic added to the overall precarious situation most churches and community were experiencing. This context had to revamp, restart, redirect, and review its church practices and processes. Having to adhere to the direction of the church's denomination's new protocols and rules was more of a challenge than a successful adventure. Some of the congregants believed having shorter church services was good while others wanted to stick to the normal church service rituals and timing. There was a freedom experienced by some in being able to conduct services on a smaller scale while others who were more traditional felt slighted. This situation caused division and without explanation led to distrust and feelings of being undervalued as a member.

After careful research and study, the proposal for raising awareness of the need to create a healthy and safe environment came to mind. The concept for training the Class Leaders who are considered sub-pastors of the church, came to me as a project to provide fellowship, encouragement, and accountability to this congregation. Class Leaders of Homewood African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church were trained in Servant Leadership as the final project as required by United Theological Seminary program. The topic of discussion on the way of love was gleaned from 1 Corinthians 12:31 through 1 Corinthians chapter thirteen. I looked at Paul's leadership and how he wanted everyone to know of God's love. In his attempts to teach and train his leaders, they strayed from the original plan and started doing things the way they wanted to do them. Arguments, division, strife, back-biting, complaints, and disobedient behaviors continued while Paul was absent from Corinth and bringing the leaders and congregation back into balance was difficult.

I also reviewed my findings using the Old Testament of the Book of First Samuel in my discussion regarding another leader, Eli who was the head priest in the temple. He too was a great leader; however, his sons refused to follow his teachings and continued working in disobedience after Eli attempted to correct them. Not all the leadership examples given in the Biblical Foundations Chapter were bad or evil. The problem rested in the lack of love and respect for Eli. The leadership under Eli refused to follow the mandates as outlined by God given to Eli to impart into his sons who were expected to provide the same type of leadership to their followers.

As I observed the members at Homewood African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, they treated one another in the sanctuary and outside of the church with little love and respect. It became clear to me that something needed to be done to provide a safer and healthier environment. I did not know what that something was. Upon further reflection, pulling from the historical aspect of this context, helped me to gather the information needed to present an atmosphere of love to the sisterhood and brotherhood in the context. I reviewed the stages of grief to understand what this context had experienced and was experiencing.

There were some congregants who were stuck in the denial stage of grief. Not only were some still in denial over losing their former pastor, due to the reassignment of the newly appointed pastor, but some fell into the denial aspect of grief again. In the denomination's process of reassigning leaders and replacing leadership in the church, there is often no time to recover and adjust to the new reality.¹ The church had lost more

¹ Jodi Clarke, "What to Know about the Five Stages of Grief," Verywell Mind, <https://www.verywellmind.com/five-stages-of-grief-4175361>.

members and ministries were not active and nothing was geared towards praising and worshipping God. It was apparent communication had been lost and there was no fellowship among the members. The second step in the grief process is anger. Studying its history and the history of the community gave me a birds-eye view of what was going on. Talking to the members was the beginning of the process of finding out more about the people and their needs. Anger appeared to be a mechanism to hold on to for some of the congregants.

Keep in mind that anger does not require us to be very vulnerable. However, it may feel more socially acceptable than admitting we are scared. Anger allows us to express emotion with less fear of judgment or rejection. Anger also tends to be the first thing we feel when starting to release emotions related to loss. This can leave us feeling isolated in our experience. It can also cause us to be perceived as unapproachable by others in moments when we could benefit from comfort, connection, and reassurance.²

The only thing the members had in common was their love for the church and persistence in staying together as a church. Bargaining to keep the program and ministries the same so that nothing changed was noted in the planning stages of this training. Some congregants believed if nothing changed, then the church or context would be okay. These ideas did not create a healthy environment and training was provided to give Class Leaders more instruction and direction on how to enhance the ministry and not to remain stagnant.

After meeting with the Class Leaders, I decided to find a way to bring this group together along with their smaller groups. I provided my leaders with community resources via social media. We met every two to three months and I continued to reiterate the duties of Class Leaders as designed by the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church.

² Jodi Clarke, "What to Know about the Five Stages of Grief," Verywell Mind, <https://www.verywellmind.com/five-stages-of-grief-4175361>.

After coming together through fellowship along with gathering ideas and suggestions for ministry purposes, I realized the group had come to what is called acceptance. Even though the congregants were still feeling the blows of loss, they were beginning to accept the successes happening within the church.

The last of the 5 Stages of Grief is acceptance. When we come to a place of acceptance, it is not that we no longer feel the pain of loss. Instead, we are no longer resisting the reality of our situation, and we are not struggling to make it something different. Sadness and regret can still be present in this phase. But the emotional survival tactics of denial, bargaining, and anger are less likely to be present during this phase of the grieving process.³

Working with other ministers during our class time at United Theological Seminary helped me to listen and learn about leadership processes and procedures. During our time in the Word of God, we learned how to focus on our leadership qualities and how the scriptures taught us to allow the Holy Spirit to speak through us and look beyond the words on paper and into the heart of God.

My approach to the final planning stages for conducting this project relied mostly on meeting with and talking to the members of the congregation. Those individuals who were willing to discuss their experience serving in this congregation reflected on how the past was full of fun and excitement. They mostly talked about the former years when the church was full, music was awesome, fundraising dinners were successful financially, special days and activities were robust and effective, and the church was on one accord. When asked what happened, there was not much discussion on that subject. However, observing the deterioration of the building and much needed repairs, few choir members

³ Jodi Clarke, "What to Know about the Five Stages of Grief," Verywell Mind, <https://www.verywellmind.com/five-stages-of-grief-4175361>.

and attendees to the worship aspect of the church, and lack of finances, revealed the current story.

Homewood African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church did not need another program added to its system. The organizational chart included everything a church would need to operate as a successful and effective religious institute. What was lacking within this congregation was communication and fellowship. None of the items on this organization chart connected. For example, each ministry was working in silo and not in solidarity. Under the new pastor's mission and vision of the church, a mantra was declared to walk and live in life, love, and liberation. The response to this mantra was well received and the congregation began to work in unity with the new leadership. The music ministry began to grow, members returned to the church to become active, and finances began to increase.

My status as a leader to the Class Leaders took flight. I met with them in person to plan a strategy to bring them together and restart the process of revival and rejuvenation. In-house meetings were held once a month discussing the purpose of the class leader system, how to connect with the people, how to minister to the sick and shut-ins, devising a list for those requesting visits and communion in the home, and planning for the next step in the process.

After meeting for several months and receiving the same responses regarding what was needed, it became apparent that to work together in a cohesive manner to achieve life, love, and liberation there had to be an extended offering of love. I completed a problem statement which indicates a situation that exists within the context. From that

point a hypothesis was created outlining a solution to what I observed to be the problem at hand.

Problem Statement

Homewood African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church has experienced a decline in membership over the past forty years. Possible causes of decline could be related to the economic downfall of the community, drugs and violence overwhelming the residents, the closing of some schools and unemployment. However, within the walls of the church the death of two long-term leaders between 2010 and 2019 left this church with a great void. Newly assigned pastors were presented to the church with the expectations to carry on without possibly noticing those who felt hopeless, helpless, and disconnected. The church kept moving without any resolution to the situation. There was no lack of leadership; however, there was a lack of consistency in the continued development of organizations within the ministry that could have been vibrant and effective.

Hypothesis

If the congregation of Homewood African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church awareness could increase on how to become a more loving and unified congregation through small group leadership training, then the congregation would be able to foster and cultivate a better relationship with God, each other, and the community for a healthier congregation. I was able to develop a plan of action utilizing the foundational principles of exhibiting love as written by the Apostle Paul in the First Book of Corinthians. Each process brought me closer to building a training outline to lay a

foundation for raising awareness of the need for the congregation to become a healthy and safe institution.

The foundational chapters each addressed how operating through a lack of love and respect for one another destroyed relationships, kept slavery alive, failing biblical religious institutions due to poor leadership, and many times caused mental stress. The interdisciplinary chapter discussed various organizations that started out with servant leadership in mind.

Project Preparation

After receiving approval from my mentor and leadership, I called upon one of the church stewards to help organize the questions for the pre- and post-surveys question in order to gain a better understanding of what would be helpful in analyzing the effectiveness of the class leader system within the context. I also reviewed archived doctoral work completed by former students on the subjects of class leadership and servant leadership for clarity. A discussion with other clergy within the denomination was very helpful as they provided insight into their church's process of the class leader system. Within the foundational chapters, I discussed John Wesley's theory of love and his class leaders' system. As I reviewed other documents as it related to servant leadership and the systems designed to ensure members or employees were treated fairly, the subject of love became clear as a starting point for creating a safe haven for congregations through a project entitled *The Way of Love: Training the Leader in Servant Leadership*.

In the introduction to the project, I engaged Class Leaders by providing them with a history of the church. We went through each pastor they remembered and how they were effective in ministry. Each of the members of this team had been appointed by the pastors where they initially served. One Class Leader had been appointed by the pastor of another congregation she had prior association with.

After introducing the project, an invitation letter was presented to the pastor for approval following a distribution to each Class Member. The informed consent and invitation were reviewed, and I made myself available for any questions or concerns. Each Class Leader had thirty days to decide whether to participate or not. In April of 2023, Homewood African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church's pastor was reassigned to another church which impeded the process of the project beginning in July and August. During the months of May through August, I had to revamp the training dates, times, and location for the training sessions. The information letter, invitation, and informed consent have been included in the appendixes. The classes were held on the social media application, Zoom twice a week from September 11, 2023, to September 28, 2023, with an additional day added for any make-up training time. The next two pages will provide the reader with the analysis that came out of the pre- and post-surveys distributed in the trainings.

Class Schedule

Class One

- Introduction
Welcome – Ice Breaker
House Rules
Prayer (10 minutes)
- Pre-Surveys (10 minutes)

- Theme song What's Love Got to Do With It? (5 minutes)
- Meditation – 1 Corinthians 13 What Love is. Relationship Discussion meditation and song (15 minutes)
- Complete questionnaire on song and meditation. (10 minutes)
- Closing Prayer (2 minutes)

Class Two

- Welcome – Ice Breaker
Prayer
Recap (10 minutes)
- Song Reckless Love (5 minutes)
Meditation – God chooses us regardless; How do we treat our members?
Discussion meditation and song (25 minutes)
- Complete questionnaire on song and meditation (10 minutes)
- Closing prayer (2 minutes)

Class Three

- Welcome - Ice Breaker
- Prayer
- Recap (10minutes)
- Song Lord I Want to be a Christian in My Heart (5 minutes)
- Meditation – Lack of love destroys – It's an Issue of the Heart
Discussion on Changing and Being Transformed (25 minutes)
- Complete questionnaire on song and meditation (10 minutes)
- Closing prayer (2 minutes)

Class Four

- Welcome – Ice Breaker
Prayer
Recap (10 minutes)
- Song We are One in the Spirit/ They Will Know We Are Christians by our Love (5 minutes)
- Meditation -The importance of showing love as a leader in the church
- Discussion on Class Leadership (25 minutes)
- Complete questionnaire on song and meditation (10 minutes)
- Closing prayer (2 minutes)

Class Five

- Welcome – Ice Breaker
Prayer
Recap (10 minutes)
- Song – Available to You (5 minutes)
- Meditation – How to prepare ourselves available for ministry
Discussion The Five Practices of an Effective Congregation (25 minutes)

- Complete questionnaire on song and meditation (10 minutes)
- Closing prayer (2 minutes)

Class Six

- Welcome – Ice Breaker
- Prayer
- Recap (10 minutes)
- Post-Surveys (10 minutes)
- Song – Give Myself Away
- Discussion The Five Practices of an Effective Congregation
Discuss on suggested next steps participants would like to see happen within the church
What we could do better, what can we add on to this training, etc. (30 minutes)
- Complete questionnaire on song and meditation (10 minutes)
- Closing prayer (2 minutes)

Methodology

There is six Class Leaders who are African American females. Each has been assigned a certain number of members to cover the population of the congregation. The pre- and post-surveys covered the demographic information relating to age groups, how many are male, how many are female, how many sessions individually are held, and how many group sessions are held, what were the take-aways from each meeting and what questions or concerns members had as it related to the church and their leadership abilities.

In asking about the age groups of those under the class leader system, I failed to ask specifically how many were for example, thirty years of age and if that person was a female or male. Asking for age groups impeded my ability to obtain a true sense of how many in each group were a certain age and gender.

It was discovered that more class leaders are needed to provide a more cohesive and smooth transition of new members. There are plans to have at least two male Class

Leaders added to the roster as new members unite with the congregation. There is also a need for better communication methods and more direct communication practices as the Class Leaders have not been consistent in connecting with their members to keep them abreast of the church activities and with checking on their well-being. Some class leaders have asked for more training and further discussions on addressing the Five Practices of a Fruitful Congregation.

One Class Leader was concerned about how to dedicate or maneuver her personal time while working with the ministry's needs. Since the pandemic, Class Leaders have not visited members who are homebound. Some of the members of the congregation are in nursing homes and updated directories are needed to at least send cards. Other methods used in this training to assess the overall work of this team included interview questions at the end of the six classes. Below I have listed the questions following up with the results of their responses.

Implementation

The first week's theme was based on a popular pop song sung and recorded by Tina Turner in the 1980s, "What's Love Got to Do With It?" First Corinthians 12:31 through First Corinthians chapter thirteen was our main scriptures used in this training. Paul used the way of love to explain a better way to live, move, and operate in the Christian world.

The discussion and meditation were centered on how some relationships start, what happens when things do not add up in a relationship, and the possibility that relationships can be successful while others may soon fail due to lack of a healthy

environment. The objectives met in this meeting based on the duties of the Class Leader when introduced to a new member were:

- Walking through the theme song for the week addressing the various phases of relationships.
- Understanding that relationships can be healthy and positive if both parties agree, commit, be willing to invest, and be on one accord.
- Understanding that communication is key when trying to work, live, and survive in a relationship.
- If the relationship is not forward moving and becomes dormant, one must ask the important question if the relationship is going to last.
- When people are not sure about their partners or in this case Class Leaders, or other members, hit and miss relationships can cause people to shut down, become confused, and not show up.
- When love has not been displayed through the Class Leader's contact or lack of contact, the member ends the relationship and now feels a need to protect themselves from abusive situations.
- As we move forward into our class sessions, we must keep the tasks/ministry of class leaders in the forefront.

The second week's discussion and meditation were centered on how God took a chance on us to love us beyond our differences. The theme song for this session, "The Reckless Love of God" by Cory Asbury indicates "Reckless Love" is based on the idea of God loving His people, a concept which is thoroughly expounded on within the Bible. More specifically, it can be said to be centered on the idea of God being ever-faithful, even when God's followers are not. For instance, Cory Asbury depicts himself as someone who was once a foe of God. However, he is here to celebrate that even adopting such a disposition did not alienate God's love for him.

I chose this song because of the love God has toward us. He made sure we felt his love. God knew us through his love; and how he continues showing his love towards us. I

picked this particular song because no matter how we respond to God's call God is always there.

The objectives met in this meeting are based on the duties of the Class Leader when introduced to a new member. As Class Leaders we should maintain that same position for our members. No matter the circumstance, we should continue to love them. It is important to recognize and understand no one is perfect, and they are all important enough to ensure they are safe, healthy, and our rapport with them continues to build. Being aware if our sick and shut-in or our elderly cannot make it or communicate with us, they have family members who watch our actions, and they know whether our church cares for them through us. The key to this song is experiencing God's forgiveness which includes his love. John 3:16-17 "God so loved the world....." He included those we would think are/were unforgiveable.

The third week's discussion and meditation were centered on the desire to be a Christian full and complete. The theme song for this session, "Lord I want to be a Christian in my Heart." This song is one of surrendering oneself to God and growing in the desire to be like Jesus. The Son came to bring us back to the Father, back to love. Jesus came to remind us of true love really.⁴ This is the message we give to our members every time we meet and talk with them. It is the good news of Jesus Christ. David Benner explained that all human beings need to surrender to Perfect Love which would be experienced by different people.⁵

⁴ David G. Benner, *Surrender to Love: Discovering the Heart of Christian Spirituality* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, 2015), 25.

⁵ Benner, *Surrender to Love*, 25.

The objectives for this class session were based upon the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Class Leader System as outlined by Evalina Huggins in her book *The Work and Ministry of Class Leadership*.⁶

CLASS LEADER SYSTEM DESCRIPTION
As Class Leaders, we are all called to obedience.
We must be willing to look at our own character; good, bad, or indifferent recognizing our own shortcomings while helping others to overcome theirs.
We have to be willing to hear what God is saying to us.
We must be willing to listen and learn.
We must be willing to take chances in this most changing world.
To be a Christian before we become leaders in the church takes on a transformational evolvement. This transformation calls for us to want to be more than who and what we are now.

During this week in the class setting, a discussion was held, and a questionnaire was given for class leaders to expound on what they talked about and what is asked of them in their small group meetings. The purpose of this process was to determine how much direct contact class leaders have with their small group and what was being discussed to help grow spiritually. As discussed in the Class Leader's manual of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, a class leader is one who gives evidence that they are led by God and seeking the Lord. They must be open and teachable and willingly admit they do not know it all. Many times, a class leader should be firm but diplomatic, making decisions reflecting on peaceful solutions. This type of leader is fair and does not react to challenging situations but responds to ensuring things are done right. Honesty, being trustworthy and being a good listener are good characteristics. These are just a few characteristics that make Class Leaders productive and effective.

⁶ Huggins, *The Work and Ministry of Class Leadership*, 27-28.

The fourth week's discussion and meditation were focused on being one in the spirit. The theme song for this session was, "We Are One in the Spirit." Or also known as "They Will Know We Are Christians by our Love" as sung by Walt Whitman Soul Children of Chicago. Changing leadership is a proactive approach seen as an opportunity for growth and improvement rather than a finite project, takes a people centric approach, gives members a voice and empowers them.

Our actions toward our members can be seen from the outside almost better than from those on the inside looking out. Our attitudes about how we respond to those who are not like us can be seen, felt, and heard from those on the outside almost better than those from the inside out.

Leaders must manage themselves first, influence others later. We must emphasize continuous improvement in ourselves first. Then we can help our members. Improving how we communicate is essential to those who are in the church. What we say, how we say it and when we say it is important. The song for today says we are one and they will know we are Christians by our love. What happened to Homewood African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church has happened to churches and organizations all over the world. In this week's class session, we discussed becoming unified again. Here are some internal and external factors that have been identified as impeding the congregation from becoming a healthy and safe environment. The changing environment due to the pandemic including Covid; slow in adapting to the shift; got too comfortable with "we are good as is;" social media and other business models affecting the overall program/process; not attractive to the community – as it once was; not analyzing how others outside of the door would benefit from what Homewood has to offer spiritually

and resourcefully; restructuring is it effective or not?; and not analyzing how others outside of the door would benefit from what Homewood has to offer spiritually and resourcefully.

In the discussion period of the class, the leaders were asked about the resources they use and how they connect differently with members who are teenagers, young adults, more seasoned members, and their families. We opened the discussion by looking at the *Five Practices of a Fruitful Congregation* written by Robert Schnase. Chart Four lists these practices along with scripture text that enhances the value of the process.

In our analysis for this week, questions were asked about how to approach these practices by having to address various age groups. Some of the participants provided answers such as sending out daily prayers and scriptures to help their members. Others had meetings in restaurants and community gathering places to fellowship together.

Chart Four - Fruitful Congregations: Five Practices

Radical Hospitality Romans 12:9-21	Congregations offer the invitation and embrace Jesus Christ, they graciously welcome others. As a result, that creates a genuine belonging that brings people together in the Christian community.
Passionate Worship John 4:21	In Passionate Worship, people are honest before God and one another, and they are open to God's presence and will for their lives.
Intentional Faith Development 1 Corinthians 9:19-24	Transformation comes through learning in the community. Congregational leaders that practice Intentional Faith Development carefully consider the full life cycle of members and look for ways the church forms faith at every age.
Risk Taking Mission and Service Matthew 25:14-30	This involves work that stretches people, causing them to do something for the good of others that they would never have considered doing if it were not for their relationship with Christ and their desire to serve Him.

Extravagant Generosity 2 Corinthians 9:6-15	Churches that practice Extravagant Generosity speak confidently and faithfully about money, giving, generosity, and the difference giving makes for the purposes of Christ and in the life of the giver. ⁷
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Week Five of our training sessions reflected on the theme song “Available to You” as sung by the Rev. Milton Brunson and the Thompson Community Singers. The words to this song provided an opportunity for the Class Leaders to rededicate themselves to the work of the church. The following observations were made and discussed realizing that being available for ministry has some requirements.

REQUIREMENTS FOR BECOMING AVAILABLE TO THE MINISTRY
Suggested Requirements for Ministry
It requires total surrender. It requires a forgiving heart.
It requires an open mindset. It requires one to have a “want to spirit”. ⁸
Being available for the work of the Holy Spirit requires more than attending meetings, church services, singing in the choir, ushering, nursing, etc.
It requires a contrite (repentant) spirit.
In the author’s introduction of the manual, he stated in the areas mentioned below, a congregation is always asking themselves “is what we offer others mediocre and routine or is it connecting and excellent?”

In the final stages of this training, I quoted Robert Schnase who stated:

The exemplary and repeated practices of Radical Hospitality, Passionate Worship, Intentional Faith Development, Risk-Taking Mission and Service, and Extravagant Generosity are the time-tested, theologically sound, and effective means congregations use to fulfill their mission with excellence and fruitfulness to the glory of God. These practices stir the church to unexpected renewal and expanded vision, just as they have for centuries. congregations are called to

⁷ Robert Schnase, “Fruitful Congregations: Five Practices,” ChurchLeaders, <https://churchleaders.com/pastors/pastor-articles/138302-robert-schnase-five-practices-of-fruitful-congregations.html#:~:text=Fruitful%20Congregations%3A%20Five%20Practices%201%20Radical%20Hospitality%20%28>.

⁸ Robert Schnase, “The Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations Extract,” https://robertschnase.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Guide_Curran08_BURRKSBT.pdf.

change the world, not just keep their doors open. God works through congregations to transform lives.⁹

The sixth week of class was a wrap up from the previous sessions held. The theme for this week was asking the question “Where do we go from here?” The theme song written and sung by William McDowell, “Give Myself Away,” was another example of surrendering our love and commitment to the work at hand. I provided this group with suggested tips on leadership.

Four Tips for Leadership Facing Small Group Trends

Most of the traditional, foundational tools of leadership are changing. What used to work no longer gets results. It is less about force and more about being friendly, gentle, persuading. In the words of Billy Welu, “It’s not always the heavy hand, but the tender touch.” Conventional wisdom and tools for connecting with people are in a state of flux. What used to work now just falls on deaf ears or winds up in a spam folder. Use short, and memorable instead of wordy tones. Include images that will generate an emotional response. It has always been about people. Now, the additional dimension of depth has been added building deep, lasting, trustworthy relationships is job number one. You must earn the right to be heard, and this comes through transparency. Speed is used to be all about getting things done quickly, at the speed of authority. Now, it is all about getting things done at the speed of community. Sharing authority and responsibility. Giving people information and time to come to their own conclusions.¹⁰

⁹ Robert Schnase, “The Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations Extract.”

¹⁰ Chet Gladkowski, “Two Small Group Trends That Are Changing Church Leadership,” Church Leaders, <https://churchleaders.com/smallgroups/424596-424596-small-group-trends.html>.

Interview Questions

1. How did you become a Class Leader?
2. How long have you been a Class Leader?
3. Have you ever collaborated with other Class Leaders in the church to complete a project or have meetings together?
4. What made you continue in this ministry?
5. What is important to you as a Class Leader?
6. What important features are we missing in class leadership ministry?
7. What are you trying to do better in this ministry?
8. How easy/hard is it to meet and address issues with your members?
9. How would you rate the value of this project?
10. How likely are you to recommend this project to other organizations in the church?
11. How could we improve in our pursuit to better meet your needs in ministry?

The concept behind asking the class leaders individually about their leadership position in the church was to assess their ability to lead, develop and mentor their members, how much training they had and their desire to build their small groups. All the participants were appointed by a pastor. Most of the Class Leaders have held this position between three and twenty-five years. None had collaborated with each other to have meetings. There was a statement made that it would be a great idea.

Continuing in the ministry appears to have given some an opportunity to make new relationships, while others already had developed a relationship with members. Overall, a feeling of love for the church and people was important, as well as a need for

dedication in discipleship. A discussion on communication continued to weave a thread throughout the training.

A genuine concern for the safety and well-being of the members was stated. It appears that this group wants to improve communication and build better relationships with the members through additional training. Ministry to the people is also important, however, overall, the concern is how to minister to their members to get their best results.

Another important feature of the class leadership system was holding in-person meetings. It is important for members to feel welcome when meeting or contacting their members. There is a drive for fellowship within this group. They want to reach out; however, there is a need for more training on how to connect.

The rating from the Class Leaders as to the effectiveness of this training was between 80-90% satisfactory. Others described the class as meaningful, and indicated they received increased knowledge as a Class Leader. Lastly, the class leaders felt the zoom training was helpful with a desire to have book study or subjects to discuss with their classes would be helpful as well. What I would have asked in addition to the questions mentioned above would have been related to asking them if they had any previous training in this type of leadership instead of assuming they were mentored in the process.

Conclusion

While engaging with the Class Leaders during the training and through conversations, they are requesting more training as it relates to time management and communication. They also stated coming into the ministry provided an opportunity for

them to meet new people. Five out of six Class Leaders agreed this project could be presented to other ministries in the church. There was one participant who was unsure if the project would work for other ministries. Other factors mentioned by the Class Leaders related to time management, balancing life between family and the church, and one leader did not want to intrude on other members' time. A desire to have more book study on the subjects that would assist being good and effective leaders was mentioned by one participant.

During six class sessions, when asked what could have been presented differently did not yield very many responses. For example, during the first week, only two participants responded saying everything was good and the other stated comparison of the song was powerful and a great reminder of their roles. The following weeks' responses by the same two individuals reflected on how the training included great examples of expectations and behaviors. The training session on being transformed and changed yielded more responses regarding the need to do better in the process. One participant acknowledged how the years have been a decline for the church; however, she referenced the five practices of a healthy congregation in her response as something to implement with her members. This class had an impact on them talking about change and how it has affected the productivity of the church.

I was most appreciative of the honesty Class Leaders presented to me. Using the number system to identify themselves helped me get a better perspective on the whole training. This was an excellent way to provide anonymity and for me to collect feedback that was productive. It was a joy to finally sit down with the leadership to laugh, talk, and

enjoy one another in fellowship. This class taught me how to see the members from a position of leadership, and how to see them through the eyes of sisterhood.

From the icebreakers to the closing prayer each week, I began to feel a connection with these six women. Each has her own personality, and each was willing to relax and enjoy the other's company. Each week was Holy Spirit led even though each lesson was written out and pre-planned. My confidence as a trainer increased as I participated in what I believed was a victory for me. The last three weeks talking about being changed, transformed, and available for ministry helped me to understand my position as a leader being accountable and visible to the congregation.

This journey provided me an opportunity to look at myself to determine what kind of leader I am. When I am sure of what I am heading into, I can walk with confidence. However, this project was challenging, and I often thought of having someone else complete the meditation portion of the class. After prayer and careful consideration, I realized that I was the only one who knew what I wanted to achieve with this project.

If given another opportunity, I would address the overall picture of the congregation in knowing what specific ages each of the Class Leaders were assigned to. I would specifically ask if they had been trained in their initial appointment as a leader. I would have an open discussion on what they believe are the factors that prohibit the church from growing. I would also have a candid, one-on-one conversation with each leader asking them if this ministry was designed for them to engage in or if they had said yes to the assignment without knowing all it entailed. Other factors that affected the class setting included participants who did not attend at least two out of the six classes. Their opinions and input were needed for me to get a better grasp of the whole team's needs.

Also, our denomination process could be challenging at times and planning for implementation of the project had to be scheduled according to the overall calendar of the local district's schedule. The other impediment included the newly appointed pastor being reassigned to another state during the initial planning period. This delayed the opportunity for me to meet with him, obtain feedback, and get approval to conduct the training.

My dream for this ministry rests directly on the leaders maintaining direct contact with members who are homebound. This appears to be the defining factor. Members need to know what is going on with their church and community. I have not planned to do this training again; however, my wish is that the Class Leaders would step up and take the lead role in ensuring that needs are met within the congregation. I have not directly considered publishing this work; however, am open to any suggestions. Overall, I am grateful for the opportunity to enhance my skills and gain more educational opportunities that involved research and much prayer. The main theme for this journey has always and continues to be "Trust the Process."

APPENDIX A
PRE-SURVEY AND POST-SURVEY

The Way of Love: Training Leaders for Servant Leadership

Pre-Survey and Post-survey

“The Class Leader Ministry is vital to the growth of the local church because class leaders are responsible for not only managing new member intake and follow up, but class leaders are also responsible for ensuring that members have the necessary resources to keep them connected to the body as well as to God.”¹

Check the best description of the size of your class members.

- ☐ 1 - 10 class members
- ☐ 11 - 25 class members
- ☐ 26 – 40 class members

I asked this question to determine if the member sizes were equal or uneven; too much to handle or not enough for productivity and effectiveness.

Post survey will provide researcher information regarding any increases or decreases in numbers.

Check the age groups of your class members? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ 1-20
- ☐ 20-30
- ☐ 31-40
- ☐ 41-50
- ☐ 51-60
- ☐ 61-70
- ☐ 71+

I asked this question to determine if members are serviced more than others. i.e., lack of attention to young adults or children due to no leader availability or lack of interest in being a leader or there are no young adults or children in the church)

¹ “The Bridgecare Class Leader Ministry,” Bridge Street AME, www.bridgestreetbrooklyn.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Class-Leader-Guide-November-2015.pdf.

How many are males _____

How many of the males are:

Sick and shut in	_____
Attend services or meetings in person	_____
Serve in other organizations in the church	_____
Do not serve in any other organizations in the church	_____
Can't serve in any other organizations in the church	_____

How many are females _____

How many of the females are:

Sick and shut in	_____
Attend services or meetings in person	_____
Serve in other organizations in the church	_____
Do not serve in any other organizations in the church	_____
Can't serve in any other organizations in the church	_____

How often do you meet class members individually?

<input type="checkbox"/> Once a week	<input type="checkbox"/> phone	<input type="checkbox"/> social media	<input type="checkbox"/> in person
<input type="checkbox"/> Twice a month	<input type="checkbox"/> phone	<input type="checkbox"/> social media	<input type="checkbox"/> in person
<input type="checkbox"/> Once a month	<input type="checkbox"/> phone	<input type="checkbox"/> social media	<input type="checkbox"/> in person

How often do you meet class members as a group?

<input type="checkbox"/> Once a week	<input type="checkbox"/> phone	<input type="checkbox"/> social media	<input type="checkbox"/> in person
<input type="checkbox"/> Twice a month	<input type="checkbox"/> phone	<input type="checkbox"/> social media	<input type="checkbox"/> in person
<input type="checkbox"/> Once a month	<input type="checkbox"/> phone	<input type="checkbox"/> social media	<input type="checkbox"/> in person

Check the best description of the topics discussed during your class leader moments.
(Check all that apply)

- ☐ Prayer with class members
- ☐ Provide community service resources.
- ☐ Provide companionship for those who live alone.
- ☐ Teach on topics of tithing, good stewardship, AMEZ Church, funerals and weddings, etc.
- ☐ Receive financial obligations from class members i.e., general claims.
- ☐ Visit class members who are sick and shut in.
- ☐ Send cards for various occasions, i.e., birthdays, get well, sympathy, encouragement, anniversaries.

☐ Discussions on life, sports, beauty and health, news, etc.

After meeting with your members what are the take aways you received? i.e., gave his/her life to Christ, member asked not to be contacted again, member is sick and unable to participate, member wants to have direct contact with pastor)

I asked this question to assess if class leaders utilize the ministry needs appropriately.

- What expectations do you have for this training program?

- What topics would you like to learn more about during training?

- Which skills would you like to improve during this training?

- There may be some missing elements in the Class Leader's skillset that she may want to improve on, and this will be a good opportunity for her to speak out.

APPENDIX B

PRE-SURVEY AND POST-SURVEY RESULTS

**PRE-SURVEY
CHART ONE**

QUESTION	EXPLANATION
How many members in your class?	Because of the overwhelming amounts of members one or two class leaders have, it was determined there is a need for more Class Leaders to be added to the class leadership role. This position would assist the membership in adjusting the numbers per Class Leaders and when new members unite with the church, the additional Class Leaders will help to build rapport and fellowship.
Check the age groups of your class members?	I did not properly ask the appropriate questions to assess the exact ages of each of the members of the class leaders' members. I was not able to assess a need for additional leaders based on individual ages.
How often do you meet class members?	There is not a clear definition as to what the Class Leaders understand to be their role beyond collecting financial obligations. However, as the class training progressed, their understanding of the process became clearer, and they were able to articulate the duties to be performed and carried out.
What topics would you like to discuss? What skills would you like to improve on?	Class leaders desired to learn how to communicate with their members, learn their true role and wanted to develop through praying with their members, wanting to be more consistent in meeting, send out cards when the opportunity arises, hoping to learn to get every class connected, how to become a better leader through love, and, how to communicate to those who don't attend,
Other topics or additional information is needed?	Topics to discuss in future trainings included, connecting through Jesus Christ, and creating relationships with each other, desire to complete a personal assessment.
	Skills to improve were knowing various topics to discuss with members, getting closer to members and praying with them.

**POST-SURVEY
CHART TWO**

	RESULTS
Class leader communication post training	The engagement processes did not increase or decrease during this training.
Some general concerns of the class leaders	For those who do engage with their members there is a desire for those who are homebound to have communion served by the pastor, some members come with negativity and leave the worship experience without socializing with members, and some have expressed a concern that children's needs not being met, especially those who have special needs.
Class Leaders suggestion for continual education	Class leaders desire to continue to learn more about the book, Surrender to Love by David G. Benner, to provide more community service resources, to learn how to teach embracing the differences of others.
Class Leaders wanting to know about time management in ministry	<p>There was still a need and desire to learn how to manage the class meetings, calls and visits when one has a busy life.</p> <p>Skills to improve on remained the same with a concentration on improving meetings and having more time do so, how to minister spiritually to the members in order to help them in their walk with God, confidence, and patience to move forward in time management to fit meetings into their own schedules.</p>
Class Leader system process remains the same	<p>The duties performed remained the same with praying for the members, providing companionship for those living alone, visiting the homebound and sending cards.</p> <p>One new item in performing duties was the Class Leaders teaching on tithing and stewardship.</p>
Suggested topics for engagement	Topics desired related to how to motivate members to church and ongoing activities.

APPENDIX C

CLASS LEADER QUESTIONNAIRE AND DISCUSSION SHEET

THE WAY OF LOVE: TRAINING THE LEADER IN SERVANT LEADERSHIP

DATE

WEEKLY QUESTIONNAIRE AND DISCUSSION SHEET SUMMARY

THEME SONG

1. THE SONG USED TODAY MINISTERED AND GAVE SOME REVELATION AS TO WHY IT WAS USED.

PARTICIPANT NUMBER	SCALE RESPONSE
6377	
5150	
2130	
9396	
1014	
2466	

2. THE TITLE OF THE MEDITATION AND SCRIPTURE WAS COMMUNICATED CLEARLY.

PARTICIPANT NUMBER	SCALE RESPONSE
6377	
5150	
2130	
9396	
1014	
2466	

3. THE MESSAGE HELPED ME GRASP THE OVERALL THEME OF THE TRAINING

PARTICIPANT NUMBER	SCALE RESPONSE
6377	
5150	
2130	
9396	
1014	
2466	

4. THE SONG AND THE MEDITATION CONNECTED CLEARLY WITH THE TRAINING

PARTICIPANT NUMBER	SCALE RESPONSE
6377	
5150	
2130	
9396	
1014	
2466	

5. ENGAGEMENT AND DISCUSSION DURING CLASS CONTRIBUTED TO MY LEARNING

PARTICIPANT NUMBER	SCALE RESPONSE
6377	
5150	
2130	
9396	
1014	
2466	

6. I RECEIVED A MORE IN-DEPTH UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT LOVE IS
AND WHAT IT IS NOT

PARTICIPANT NUMBER	SCALE RESPONSE
6377	
5150	
2130	
9396	
1014	
2466	

7. I UNDERSTOOD THE PURPOSE OF TODAY'S PRESENTATION AS I
MOVE FORWARD AS A CLASS LEADER

PARTICIPANT NUMBER	SCALE RESPONSE
6377	
5150	
2130	
9396	
1014	
2466	

8. WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN PRESENTED DIFFERENTLY AS WE
PREPARED FOR THE NEXT PHASE OF THE TRAINING?

PARTICIPANT NUMBER	RESPONSE
6377	
5150	
2130	
9396	
1014	
2466	

9. WHAT DOES LOVE MEAN TO YOU? CHECK ALL THAT APPLY TO YOU.

PARTICIPANT NUMBER	RESPONSE
6377	
5150	
2130	
9396	
1014	
2466	

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW WITH THE CLASS LEADERS

Interview Questions for Class Leaders

1. How did you become a class leader?
2. How long have you been a class leader?
3. Have you ever collaborated with other class leaders in the church to complete a project or have meetings together?
4. What made you continue in this ministry?
5. What is important to you as a class leader?
6. What important features are we missing in class leadership ministry?
7. What are you trying to do better in this ministry?
8. How easy is it to meet and address issues with your members?
9. How would you rate the value of this project?
10. How likely are you to recommend this project to other organizations in church?
11. How could we improve in our pursuit to better meet your needs in this ministry?

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